Modern Gothic Architecture

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Modern Gothic Architecture

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PREFACE.

To thoughtful students of Architecture these pages will perhaps present little that has not at some time passed through their minds; however much there may be from which many of them, for whose opinion the writer has the sincerest respect, will dissent.

To the general reader the questions here discussed will not be so familiar. What has been written will not be altogether useless if it should induce any one to pause in the midst of the revival of Gothic Architecture which is being so assiduously promoted, and to consider candidly what useful end the revival is to serve, and what solid advantage society has hitherto obtained from it.

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MODERN
GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE.

CHAPTER I.

THE PROPER END OF THE GOTHIC REVIVAL.

ALTHOUGH the choice of a style of architecture for modern use has afforded matter for warm debate to at least two generations, a general agreement of opinion on the subject seems as remote now as it was when the question of style was first raised. There are still amongst us a few representatives of the old uncompromising Classic school, although most of those who were trained in it have yielded occasionally to the attractions of other styles. There are also uncompromising Gothicists in abundance, who believe the revival of classic architecture in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to have

been a lamentable error, productive of disastrous results on modern art, and who insist on the exclusive use of the Gothic style. Again, there is a small but increasing minority consisting of younger men, men of strong artistic sensibility and enthusiasm, men who were themselves not long ago, and perhaps are even now, among the warmest lovers of ancient Gothic art, on whose palate modern Gothic begins to pall. They have rebelled against the strict limits of authority and precedent within which the Gothic school would confine them; they have learned that there are more styles than one which may claim a legitimate influence over modern art; they miss in the simpler and ruder forms of Gothic that accuracy in design and high finish in workmanship which are most conformable to modern habit, and to which the later styles have accustomed us; and they begin to cast their eyes once more towards the forsaken and calumniated Renaissance.

It is not the object of the following pages to state and examine the claims of superiority over its rival styles that have been made for Gothic architecture; but starting with the as-

sumption that on the whole popular feeling is inclined in its favour, and that there is good reason why it should be so, our purpose will be to inquire why it is that the Gothic revival has not produced those favourable effects on modern art that might have been looked for; to point out certain mistakes in our practice which may account for the failure; and to suggest certain remedies. It will, however, be necessary in the first instance to enter so far into the controversy of style as to ascertain the principles by which the choice of a style should be governed, and in accordance with which we shall assume that our preference has rightly been bestowed on the Gothic style; for if these principles are not rightly understood, the relation in which we stand to our adopted style cannot be rightly understood either, nor the proper way of practising it determined.

That the choice of a style is in fact to be governed by any principles at all seems questionable in the face of the anomalous history of European architecture during the last four hundred years. When we remember the sudden and violent revolution in art which is to be

reckoned at once among the causes and results of the revival of learning, and of that great intellectual movement by which Europe passed from mediæval to modern ideas,—a revolution which seemed to have consigned the art of the middle ages to everlasting contempt, the mere fact of the re-appearance of the Gothic style in sufficient force to threaten the extinction of Classic will appear strange enough. Still stranger, however, is the history of our practice of the recovered style, and the way in which during a very few years we have twice run through all those varieties of Gothic architecture which represent the steady growth of four centuries. At first it was the popular impression that the right plan would be to take Gothic architecture up at the point where our ancestors had dropped it. This lasted till it was discovered that the 'Perpendicular' style was nothing but Gothic in its dotage, and that we ought to look to the period of its youth and maturity for instruction rather than to that of its decline. The current consequently set backwards, and the earlier styles one after another came into vogue, the taste for severity and boldness gradually growing on the

artistic palate till the earliest form of geometrical Gothic was reached; and this, too, was itself left behind by some of the bolder spirits whom nothing would satisfy but the grandeur and vigorous simplicity of the transitional work of the end of the twelfth century. Then the tide ebbed again; the earlier forms of Gothic were felt to be too rude in their grandeur, and too severe in their simplicity for the refinement of modern life. Late work is again in fashion, though treated, it need scarcely be said, in a very different spirit and more scientific way than in the time of Pugin; and so we are at last brought down again to the very verge of the Renaissance, while the more adventurous already peep over the edge, and are more than half resolved to plunge in. Such a review as this may well shake the faith even of the staunchest believer in the natural aptitude of certain styles for certain people. And yet there surely must be some principle or rule to guide us in the matter; the selection of a style for our modern use can hardly be a fair subject for mere arbitrary preference. It might be so if the styles between which the choice lay differed

among themselves only on arbitrary grounds. If their differences were merely the result of caprice and fancy, our choice might reasonably be left to caprice and fancy also. But if it be admitted that the differences which distinguish one style from another are based upon natural facts and realities, and not upon fancies, we must proceed to our choice in a very different way. Before we can assure ourselves that any particular style will suit us, we must discover what it is that has made it differ from other styles, and given it that distinguishing form by which we know it.

What, then, is it that makes one style differ from another? What, in short, is style?

In the first place, it must be remembered that there are certain points on which all good styles agree, for they all obey the same broad catholic principles of truth, honesty, and simplicity. To use materials in the way nature has best fitted them to be used; to consult in every building the habits and sentiments of contemporary society; to keep pace with the advances which the age makes towards light and knowledge; to express visibly in general design and in ornamentation

this loyalty to the nature both of men and means; and to do all this in the directest way, avoiding vain parade of novelty on the one hand, and excessive regard for conventionality on the other, and following unhesitatingly whithersoever truth and nature lead—these have been the characteristics of genuine architecture in every age and country.

It is most important at the present day, when the battle of styles is raging, and when each man is tempted to be blindly intolerant of other styles than the one he himself follows, to remember this fact of the catholicity of art; to recognise in all true styles the same general principles, the same object, and, to a certain extent, even the same methods of procedure.

In the second place, when we turn to those peculiarities which distinguish the various styles, we shall find that so far from being merely the effect of fancy and caprice, they do in fact result from the application of one of those catholic principles in which they all agree. Differences of race, religion, climate, soil, material, means of foreign intercourse, physical geography, natural production, and so on, have created in each

country its own special requirements, and its own peculiarities of habit, taste, thought, and pursuit, all which unite to give it that *national* character which distinguishes it from other nations. Again, at different stages of its history and its progress in civilisation, the same nation presents very different moral aspects, and experiences very different necessities. All these peculiarities of habit and requirement it is the business of art to study, to satisfy, and to represent; for the general principle of truthfulness requires that art should be representative and historical. There are then two sets of causes at work in the formation of every healthy and living style of art :—

1. The broad catholic principles of Truth and Nature, which are equally obeyed by every good style.

2. Those minor differences of habit, taste, and requirement, varying with each people, country, and age, by observing which art becomes insensibly moulded among each people and at each age into that form which most exactly fits and reflects them.

Obedience to the first is the bond which unites

all good styles into one general system of art; the fact which entitles each to rank as a member of *Art Catholic.* Obedience to the second causes art in different countries and at different times to fall into distinct *styles*, differing in the same degree in which those who use them differ from each other.

The secondary principles are, as it were, bye-laws of art, interpreting certain general principles and applying them to each case. Their authority is derived from the general and universal principles of art; to disobey the lesser is to disobey the greater obligations, and consequently to violate the very first principles of art itself.

In our search for a style, then, it will not do to stop at the first good one we meet with; for it follows from what has been said that *all styles of art that have spontaneously arisen, and that have ever really lived at any time or place are good*, because they owe their existence to the healthy action of certain natural causes. Nor will it do to choose from among several styles that which we think to be abstractedly the best. To ask simply whether Classic art is better or worse

than Gothic, or whether Indian art is better or worse than Chinese, is idle; all these styles are good, for all are founded on the natural idiosyncrasies of those who produced them; and each is or has been in its own age and country more suitable and therefore better than any other. Their abstract comparative merit, if it were of any importance to decide it, must be determined by comparison, not of one art with another, but of the civilisation of those peoples whom the different arts represent. The question for us is that of their comparative suitability or unsuitability for ourselves; and this must be decided by the likeness or unlikeness of our social condition and circumstances to those of which each of these arts has in its turn been the natural expression.

The reverse of the foregoing statement is also true: *All art wherever we find it in a healthy state bears the character of a distinct style.* There can be no such thing as one universal style, equally suitable to all the world and to every age; and any style that pretends to such a dignity may fairly enough be considered to have pronounced its own condemnation. This un-

suitability is more evident in the case of nations that differ in race and climate; but it is no less real in the case of difference of age. For history never repeats itself; in the closest historical parallels the divergence of the lines is out of all proportion to their agreement: it is only for short distances that they run together, and consequently the style of art which was engendered by a people in one age, cannot exactly reflect or represent the social condition of the same people in a different age.

If this be so, it follows that no adopted style can exactly suit those who adopt it; and it is important that we who practise Gothic architecture in the nineteenth century should not lose sight of this. We are unfortunately so circumstanced that we are obliged to adopt a style for reasons that will be presently stated, and this being so, we believe on the whole that the only sensible course that lies open to us is to adopt that style which once grew naturally out of English soil. If ever it were possible to transplant a style successfully it would certainly be in such a case as this, when a nation in search of a style adopts for present use one which had

sprung up spontaneously within its own borders, and had actually served it at a former period of its history; for differences of age are only differences of degree, differences of race and country are differences of kind. But however strongly we may be convinced that Gothic architecture, and especially the English variety of it, is the right style to be adopted by modern England, we must not expect to find it, as it has come down to us from the middle ages, able to satisfy all the varied requirements, or reflect all the peculiarities of modern society. No other style may suit us so well (for our social system, and we ourselves, changed as we are, are naturally and regularly derived from the men and the society of the middle ages); but we must be prepared to modify it to an indefinite extent, in hope of obtaining in due time one that will suit us better, and fit our every requirement. We must value Gothic art chiefly because it, rather than any other we know of, is so congenial to our times that it may fairly be expected to live again in modern soil, and so to fructify and give birth to a new and living art which we can really call our own.

If, then, to revive Gothic architecture precisely in the form in which it once lived is neither possible nor desirable, and if the attainment of a new style proper to ourselves should be the real end of our labour, why are we to adopt Gothic art at all? Why not strike boldly out for ourselves at once, without looking behind us for precedent and example?

This is not possible either. Nothing is more certain than the impossibility of our inventing a new style directly, and the necessity of our choosing some appropriate style out of which the new style, if it ever comes, will naturally and insensibly develope itself. If we make a right choice, and if we succeed in making our adopted art *live again* in any degree, that is to say, if we raise it from the condition of a dead language to that of a living vernacular, then a new style will inevitably be developed out of it without any conscious attempt on our part to seek it. We can attain this result in no other way: we must plant the seed before we can expect the flower, and the seed must be the relic of former life, the fruit of an older flower that has itself blossomed and died. If we trace

the history of all the noble styles of architecture that have in turn appeared and disappeared, we find that every one of them sprang from some older style, till we are lost in the dimness of antiquity and can trace no longer. Style after style successively arose without, so far as we can judge, any conscious effort on the part of those who produced it. The old style melted imperceptibly into the new, following the action of natural law rather than the deliberate invention of men. The builders of antiquity never sat down to invent a new style as some would have us moderns do. Their only thought was to modify the existing art of their day to suit the novelties and keep pace with the growth of an advancing civilisation.

There cannot be a plainer instance of this than the origin of Gothic architecture itself affords. When Charlemagne undertook to restore the arts which were extinct in his country, he had no dream of creating a *new* art. His intention was to revive that Roman art whose splendid remains then overspread the whole of Gaul; and he sent for architects to the Eastern Empire which still called itself Roman,

and to Lombardy and Spain, countries in which he supposed the traditions of Roman art would have been preserved better than elsewhere. But from his renaissance of Roman art arose results far different from those he had anticipated, differing from them in fact as widely as his empire differed from that of the Cæsars, and in the same particulars. Charlemagne to be sure was Emperor of the West, but instead of being the head of a dominant race to whose undisputed sovereignty the world was subject, he had only united under one rule for a few years, and by the force of his personal genius, a number of discordant nations which had nothing in common; and his empire, like Timour's, flew asunder the moment his death removed the tie that kept it together. The great works of the ancient empire had been built by the Romans, the few, at the expense of the many; the establishment of a Roman villa exhausted the labour of hundreds and sometimes thousands in the service of one; but in Charlemagne's time the world was changed; the servile submission of the tributaries of Rome had been replaced by the independence and love of personal liberty

which the fierce Germanic races brought with them into the ancient Roman territories, and Roman architecture had become an impossibility. Those very countries to which Charlemagne sent for artists had already begun to develope new styles of their own, and the men whom he brought from thence introduced into his empire principles of design already differing widely from those of antiquity. Charlemagne's Renaissance answered his object in the end by revivifying *Art*, but it did not do it in the way he proposed, namely, by revivifying *Roman art*. It resulted, after the lapse of three centuries, in developing an entirely new style, which, though it long bore traces of its origin in ancient art, was nevertheless as a whole unlike anything the world had ever seen before, spontaneously engendered by the nascent civilisation of modern times.

The history of modern literature furnishes perhaps the best possible illustration of the way in which a new style may arise from the attempt to revive an old one. When the Western Empire fell, the literature like the art of Western Europe was extinguished. The languages of the

different countries passed into *patois* corrupted from Latin, with no regular structure or determinate grammar, in which a native literature was impossible ; while the cultivation of ancient literature was discouraged by the clergy, who alone had access to it.* From the seventh century, which has been pronounced by M. Guizot 'the nadir of the human mind in Europe,' to the eleventh, little improvement took place; what progress was made after that date is traceable to the increased cultivation of ancient literature ; and the decline of learning in the thirteenth century to the preference then given to the dry subtilties and corrupt Latinity of the schoolmen, and the spread of the Mendicant orders. When at last, at the end of the fourteenth century, a sudden enlightenment took place, it was clearly owing to the sudden revival of interest in ancient literature. The great authors of antiquity were restored to their places as the standard of purity in diction and style, and, from being

* Gregory the Great is said to have despised the observance of grammar in his own writings, and condemned the knowledge of it in his clergy, and generally to have been 'as great an enemy of learning as ever lived.'

neglected, they came in the next century to be all but worshipped.*

The history of the revival of learning illustrates our subject in two ways:—In the first place, it is evident modern Europe made no appreciable advance in letters till she began to revive the literature of the ancients. The revival of learning in the fifteenth century was not the result of gradual and continual progress, but of the sudden return to the ancient models. Just in the same way it is necessary to revive some great art that has already existed, as a model for our modern art.

In the next place, we know that the result of the revival of ancient literature has been not to reproduce the old Latin style, but to produce a genuine living style in the vulgar tongues of modern Europe, as different from that of the ancients as our civilisation is from theirs, and as peculiar to us as theirs was to them. The result of the revival of ancient literature was the creation of modern literature. And let it not be forgotten that, just as in the case of Charlemagne's Renaissance, this result

* The history of the discovery and translation of the so-called bones of Livy at Padua (A.D. 1413) is an instance.

came about naturally and spontaneously, it was not at all what the moving agents of the revival intended. Petrarch prided himself on his Latin epic about the second Punic war, and thought very little of his sonnets and odes in his own language. Both he and Boccaccio relied for glory upon their Latin writings, but their immortality is, in fact, owing to those compositions in Italian which they regarded as mere relaxations from their classical labours. Their dream was to restore the cultivation of Latin and Greek in their purity; the immediate effect of their labours was to form the Italian language, and enrich it with the first-fruits of a new literature; their efforts to revive an old style resulted in the development of a new one. It is only in the same way that we shall ever acquire a new style of architecture. We can no more foresee what form the new style will take than we can foresee what style of poetry will be written two hundred years hence: we can no more sit down and invent it than Milton could have sat down and written 'In Memoriam' instead of 'Lycidas.' It must come of itself, and we must be content to wait for it; but the

more we strive to make our art real and natural, and characteristic of ourselves, the sooner will the new style be developed.

The results of Charlemagne's attempted Renaissance of Roman art, and Petrarch's attempt to revive Roman literature, teach us that the real and proper end of the revival of a bygone style is an indirect result from it; namely, the recovery of that artistic temper by which men will be led to express themselves in their work with truth, force, and feeling, just as their forefathers once did by means of that style which is now adopted for revival. The task that is set before us of the nineteenth century is not the revival of this or that particular style; it is something far wider than that: it is nothing less than the revival of art itself. We have to learn once more to look to art as a ready outlet for ideas, and a natural vehicle for thought; to regard it as an instrument to be used, not a curiosity to be looked at; the equal heritage of all men, not an appanage of wealth and learning. Time was when every fabric that was built, every piece of furniture that was made—however costly or however humble it might be—was done artistically and well, and yet

without any conscious effort on the part of the workman to wrench himself free from ordinary ideas and throw himself into an artistic frame of mind. It was natural to him to do everything he had to do artistically. The humblest handicraftsman, setting to work on a bench end, cut upon it just the right mouldings, just the best and most suitable ornament that could have been devised for it; and he did this simply because he knew no other way of doing it: because he had been bred up in a living and growing style, which resulted from the accumulated and still accumulating experience of many generations, which solved many difficulties of design by offering an undisputed method, and which he adopted as naturally and unthinkingly, when he had to work, as he did his native language when he had to speak. It was thus whenever art *lived;* but among us the tradition, and indeed the very instinct of art, have been till lately practically dead, so far as concerns architecture at all events; we have lost the habit of using art as a material language, in which we can convey as much as the poet does by his words, very much in the same way. It is this habit that we want

to recover, and this is what is meant by reviving art, or making it live again: and when we recover this habit, it follows naturally and inevitably that the art we practise must fall into a style peculiarly expressive of ourselves, not the mere imitation of the style of a past age.

We, therefore, who are reviving Gothic art should study in ancient Gothic not so much the ideas therein expressed as the method of expressing them. The ideas, in many cases, may have served their time and passed out of date; suitable and natural enough once, they may be altogether inappropriate to the present day: but the method, if artistically a good one, is as good now as it ever was; and it is this part, the spirit rather than the letter of the old style, that is of consequence to us. Let us once catch the spirit of old work, let us once master the principles which made it what it was, and carry them out thoroughly in our practice, whatever we may have to do, and the revival of Gothic will have answered its purpose.

This revival, then, is not in itself an end, but only a means to an end; it will be to us what alchymy has been to science: the cause of disco-

veries towards which it was not immediately directed, while its own immediate object has remained, and must for ever remain, unattained. We, too, have been like alchymists, grasping at a shadow, dreaming of an actual restoration of Mediæval art dreams from which we are beginning to awake, to find them as delusive and idle as those of the philosopher's stone.

If we accept this as the true account of the relationship in which we stand to our revived art, and of the end which it is to serve; if we regard it not as mere antiquaries, but as practical artists, we may form some idea of what modern Gothic architecture must be in order to deserve the name. *Theoretically*, our definition of it will come simply to this—'The practice of architecture in Great Britain according to true and natural principles.' For it was the application of these principles to the circumstances of Western Europe during the middle ages that produced Gothic architecture; and the application of the same principles to our own generation ought to produce an architecture which would certainly be Gothic—because modern society is nothing but mediæval society grown

to maturity—but which would as certainly differ from mediæval Gothic as much as we differ from our forefathers of six hundred years ago. But, *practically*, it comes to rather more than this with us: for, although it is true theoretically that if we do but apply these principles to our work, the results we have indicated will follow at once, and we shall be immediately in possession of the modern Gothic style we want, we are in practice incapable of applying them thus immediately. It is only through the medium of a living, existing style that mankind can carry the true principles of art into practice, and we have no such living style in existence among us. To apply these principles at once to our work would be, in fact, to create a new style, and we have already shown that new styles cannot be created thus suddenly, but must be gradually and naturally developed out of other styles that already exist. It is the peculiar difficulty of our case that we have first to adopt a dead style, and then to quicken it to life: for till it begins to revive, or, in other words, till we become thoroughly at home in it, and learn to express

ourselves in it naturally and easily, it is incapable of further developement.

It is for these reasons that we urge the temporary, but at present exclusive use of the Gothic style of the past; and it is for the same reasons that we claim the right, as we become more used to the style, to mould and fashion it to suit the modern world, as fast and as freely as the growth of our artistic power will enable us.

Let us turn for a moment to review the history of art since the Gothic revival took place, and ask what that revival has hitherto effected towards a general recovery of art.

It has, to some extent, succeeded in teaching the world that art is not a matter of recipe and formula, but of common sense; that it cannot be stereotyped into 'orders,' but that its life depends on its liberty to grow, to change, and to progress. It is not too much to say that all the healthy art of the present day in architecture, painting, and sculpture, may be traced to the influence of the Gothic revival. But has that revival brought us again the golden times when work was honest in material and perfect in the

proper use of it; when it fell naturally into beautiful forms, and when, as we are apt to think, mistakes of taste were never committed: when the humblest workman might be trusted to do what he did, not only well, but artistically, of his own free will, and for his own satisfaction: when the smith, though working, perhaps, upon an altogether insignificant object, would be careful to wreathe his iron-work into graceful lines, and to hammer and draw it out with that exquisite sense of the proper use of material, and of the effect that may be got out of it, which no art-school but the workshop can ever teach: when craftsmen of all grades and kinds understood one another, and could be depended upon to produce work that would be harmonious, consistent, and obedient to one general style: when every building had something from which the passer-by might learn a lesson, something to evidence thought and design: when towns were places to live in and to be proud of, not places to fly from as soon as ever the daily work was done? How much of this has the revival of Gothic given us again?

Little enough. Imagine a man of educated

taste walking down the streets of London in order to enjoy an architectural treat! It may safely be said that, with very few exceptions, the only buildings which he would find to admire are those which were built before the Gothic revival was thought of. Out of those that have been built during the present century, and especially during the last ten or fifteen years, barely one in a hundred will seem to him even decently tolerable. Among the ninety-nine there will be loud pretentious buildings, that stare the passer-by out of countenance; heavy sumptuous buildings, that invite him to guess how much they cost; mock-mediæval buildings, that make him rue the day when Gothic architecture was revived; and the rest will be tame shams of stucco and paint—perhaps the least intolerable of the whole number. Of all these — except, perhaps, the last class — the Gothic revival, it is to be feared, is either directly or indirectly the cause. It is directly responsible for those slavish and mechanical imitations of mediævalism, those anachronisms in architecture, which, though less offensive than the vulgarities of the other school, are equally obstruc-

tive to real progress, and are based on an entirely wrong view of the object of the revival. And it is indirectly responsible for the more offensive class; for the sudden reaction which it introduced, from the strictness and dulness of the work that preceded it, has opened the door to that spirit of libertinism in design which the elder school sternly repressed, but which has now enlisted under the banner of the Gothic style, and fills our streets with buildings that may safely be pronounced the worst that have been produced in any age or any country. It must be confessed that the Gothic movement, in spite of all the good it has done, has failed as yet to produce anything approaching to that general recovery of art to a healthy state which is its proper end.

In the following chapters we shall consider, separately and in detail, the principal causes of the failure, and suggest their remedy.

CHAPTER II.

FORMALISM AND PURISM.

THE first danger that besets the revival of a dead style arises from an excessive regard for precedent; from that blind imitation of the letter or outward form of the adopted art, which is so much more common because it is so much easier than the intelligent study of the spirit and principles which once animated it, and which alone can animate it again. The history of the revival of learning will again serve us as an instance, if we turn to its earlier stages.

The revival had at first all the violence which accompanies a revolutionary movement, with most of its attendant evils: the authors of the revolution, as usual, suffered for the good of those that came after. 'They injured their own age by their exclusive bias for erudition. The imagination was extinguished; genius disappeared; and even the language retrograded. It

was abandoned, as too vulgar, for the Latin, by all those who attained any distinction for talents ; the forms of thinking of the ancients were adopted with those of their language, and pedantry soon smothered all national originality.'* 'The love of Greek and Latin absorbed the minds of Italian scholars, and effaced all regard to every other branch of literature.' Their own language was nearly silent. Few condescended so much as to write letters in it ; as few gave a moment's attention to physical science.'† 'Even in Latin they wrote very little that can be deemed worthy of remembrance, or even that can be remembered at all.' ‡ The so-called Ciceronians, whom Erasmus satirized, devoted themselves to the exclusive cultivation of the style of Cicero, which they pushed so far that some of them would not use the words of Cicero's correspondents, though as highly accomplished and polite as himself. Of one of them it has been remarked that 'in his great solicitude about the choice of words, he

* Sismondi, 'Ital. Repub.' p. 154.
† Hallam, 'Lit. Eur.' vol. i. p. 104.
‡ Ibid.

was indifferent enough to the value of his meaning.'*

It is easy enough to detect and denounce the absurdity of this pedantic school, and we are ready enough to do so; and yet we, many of us, practise our revived Gothic architecture at the present day in a way which is very like Ciceronianism. It is the letter and not the spirit of Gothic that our architects commonly study. To many of them, and, perhaps, to nearly all the unprofessional public, the essence of the style seems to consist in the use of certain definite forms; no building which is without them would be admitted to belong to the style, and no building possessing them would be excluded. Hence it is that hundreds of modern buildings which pass for Gothic, and of whose orthodoxy was never any doubt, are no more Gothic than they are Egyptian.

Most probably this assertion will seem fanciful and overstrained; for of all styles of architecture, Gothic is generally thought the most unmistakeable. Many men who would not pretend to know Roman architecture from Greek, Doric

* Hallam, 'Lit. Eur.' vol. i. p. 323.

from Egyptian, or Egyptian from Assyrian, have no hesitation in pronouncing a building Gothic or not Gothic. If we take them to a modern building, and ask them what reason they have for believing it to be Gothic, they appeal to the pointed form of the arches, the tracery in the windows, the high pitch of the roofs; and they would think us unreasonable if we asked for further proof. And yet further proof will be demanded by one who really understands Gothic architecture, and the relation in which it stands to modern society. All those forms may be present, and yet the building may be an imposture. It is quite true that ancient Gothic architecture under certain circumstances used traceried windows and pointed arches, but traceried windows and pointed arches did not make Gothic architecture then, nor will they now. Under other circumstances, even in ancient times, she discarded tracery, and used round or segmental or even elliptical arches instead of pointed ones, and nevertheless continued to be the same style. There is no lack of instances to prove this; there are many round-arched Gothic buildings of a date long after the

introduction of the pointed arch, and there exist churches dating from the thirteenth century which are lighted by plain square windows without tracery and without even arched heads. The essence of the style is not involved in the presence or absence of those forms which are popularly connected with the idea of Gothic architecture. Without the aid of historical evidence, the very nature and character of the style are enough to teach us that it must be so. Like all noble styles, the Gothic art of the middle ages took unhesitatingly whatever forms resulted naturally from the application of certain fixed principles to the varying circumstances of each case, and perhaps in no other style have the architectural forms been so elastic and variable, and so ready of accommodation to circumstance. It is not too much to say that in Gothic architecture of the purest and best period, after it had completely divested itself of those archaic traditions that clung to it in its infancy and youth, every form had a meaning and a purpose referring to something beyond itself: either it was founded on some constructional necessity, or it illustrated some social or

individual requirement, or it reflected the mind and the history of the age. We may always ask the reason for everything in ancient Gothic architecture, with the certainty that a reason will be forthcoming; and we ought not to be satisfied with our modern art till we can in the same way assign a reason for every feature in it, based, as in its ancient prototype, on some point of convenience, economy, or construction on the one hand, or some feeling for natural truth and historical propriety on the other. There is to those who, like ourselves, are working, not in a natural style, but in a borrowed one, a peculiar danger of falling into a conventional and purely imitative mode of work, against which we must be on our guard. The moment we begin to use the forms of Gothic architecture simply because they are called Gothic, and not because we perceive in them a meaning that makes them suitable to our building, and that appeals to our personal consciousness, making us feel our work to be part of ourselves, stamped with the impress of our own minds—that moment does the work in our hands cease to be Gothic at all, in our modern sense of the word, and become pseudo-Gothic, mere Ciceronianism.

It is in our domestic buildings that this false architecture is most common and most easy of detection. The classic shams of Pimlico with its stucco cornices, architraves, and porticos, have been so often exploded that no reasonable man would attempt to defend them. One need not dwell upon them except to point out that their meanness does not consist in the use of stucco; stucco is an honest and useful material enough when properly employed. Such work is bad *morally*, because it is a cheap imitation of forms which are by their origin and nature costly; and it is bad *artistically*, because it imitates in a plastic material forms which originally resulted from the working of hard stone or marble, to which materials alone (and only to the best of these) they are really suitable. But contemptible as these buildings are, our Gothic houses are even worse. Their pretence to the style is confined generally to a few external features, and ceases at the threshold. The builder's end is to make his house appear architectural, without interfering with those conventional modes of finishing and ornamenting it which fashion prescribes. A few bargeboards,

gable ends, or arched windows, outside, stand for Gothic architecture; while there is nothing inside to tell you that you are not in Gower Street or Pimlico. Some houses of this class have really nothing on which to rest their claim to Gothicism, beyond a bay window, and a few feet of balustrading pierced with quatrefoils. Surely nothing can be more absurd and inconsistent than this? If the builder's experience taught him that an ordinary Cockney house was more comfortable and better than a Gothic one, why, in the name of common sense, did he want to make his house Gothic at all? Or, again, if he was satisfied that Gothic was a better style than the one in common use, why did he not use it thoroughly inside and outside the house alike? Either he was really working in a good style, and perversely trying to make it look like a bad one, or else he was wilfully persisting in a bad style, and trying to pass it off for a good one. The all-important truth, that the principles of Gothic architecture demand the absolute control of the whole anatomy and structure of the building, never occurred to his mind. On the contrary, he considered Gothic architecture to be a collec-

tion of certain decorative forms, from which he might borrow any one that pleased his fancy, and apply it to his building after it was finished as well as before, thereby making his building Gothic. According to this system, if we wish our house to be Gothic, we have only to stamp it with one or more of these forms; they frank it, and it will pass.

It is much the same with our church architecture, though the fault is less flagrant there, because the simplicity of the building partly removes the temptation to disguise or conceal the construction, so that it has, at all events, a show of honesty to recommend it. But in most cases the construction itself is adopted, not from a rational conviction that it is the most suitable, not from any consideration for convenience or historical propriety, but because it is conventionally supposed to be Gothic; and even when the construction happens to be right and appropriate, that is not the reason why it is chosen. A modern Gothic church of the ordinary type is made up by the mere mechanical repetition of certain stereotyped forms and stale methods. Fashion prescribes that the roofs

should be high-pitched, framed with open timbers visible from within the building, as in a barn. The woodwork, whether of oak or deal, must be stained and varnished ; the walls inside must be plastered with a dreadful sort of grey and gritty plaster that it sets one's teeth on edge to touch or even to think of ; the windows must be filled with mullions and tracery of quatrefoils and trefoils, and glazed with 'Cathedral' glass, which admits a dismal greenish light, such as one might expect if the church were a great diving-bell several fathoms under water. We have only to furnish it with a pavement of encaustic tiles figured with barbarous patterns of animals and scrolls ; a little smart metal-work of brass and iron—the brass polished, the iron painted of a raw blue colour ; a few cheap painted windows of the flimsiest glass, the tawdriest colouring, and the vilest drawing ; and we have a pretty accurate description of nine-tenths of our modern churches, with which, it may be presumed, the public taste is perfectly content. Nearly all these features are purely conventional and impertinent, and only a very few are really necessary parts of Gothic design

in our country. For instance, no modern building could be called Gothic in England without a high-pitched roof,* because such a roof is the only one fit for our climate, with its rain and snow, and driving winds; and because our Gothic architecture is founded on these natural and invariable peculiarities of our climate. But, whether necessary or not, these forms are adopted in the case I am supposing, not because they are good and appropriate, and have an intelligible object and purpose, but because they are said to be 'Gothic'; not because of their meaning, but because they form part of the Gothic vocabulary; and for this reason they are not Gothic, but pseudo-Gothic: Gothic in form, but not in spirit. All buildings of this sort are

* Certainly not when the building is to be covered with slate, tile, shingle, or such materials, as is the case with most modern buildings. But it is doubtful whether, under any circumstances, low-pitched roofs can with safety and convenience be used in our climate. The experience of most architects will, I believe, testify that the low pitch that prevailed in the fifteenth century has led to the ruin of many roofs in spite of their costly covering of lead or copper. It is remarkable that after the fifteenth century a pretty general return was made to a high pitch, even in those buildings which can hardly be called Gothic.

hypocritical and shams, even though all their arches be pointed, all their windows filled with tracery, and though every part be studded with as many trefoils and quatrefoils as there is room for.

But there is another way in which formalism influences modern Gothic architecture. It is natural enough that the ignorant and careless should mistake superficial features for essential elements; but if ignorance is most likely to betray the architect into this error, it would seem that knowledge will not always save him. There are many modern architects whose deep reverence for old work, and whose keen perception of the inferiority of our own, has persuaded them that our only chance of doing well is to do nothing without a distinct precedent in Gothic art. The exaggerated value which is thus attached to the exact imitation of the forms of ancient architecture is another phase of the same error of which we have been speaking, however sincere and estimable, and to a certain extent reasonable the motives may be which have occasioned it.

It is absolutely impossible to overrate the

importance of the careful and minute study of old work. Those architects have, of course, done best in revived Gothic who know most about the original style; indeed it is inconceivable that any person should become even a tolerable architect at the present day who has not searched into the construction and ornamentation of old Gothic buildings, acquainting himself with every part of their design in detail, by drawing them himself, and by the aid of casts, photographs, and perhaps, more than all, by actual measurement, taken with the utmost nicety, and accurate to a hair's breadth. But all this granted, to say that nothing must be done without precedent is to deny the existence of that elasticity in Gothic art which is the very quality that, more than any other, fits it for revival and adaptation to our modern use; for Gothic art, as we have already explained, cannot be made to live again exactly in the form which it took in the thirteenth century: one might as well try to revive the Crusades or trial by ordeal—it is not desirable even if it were possible.

If it is asked: What is the legitimate use of

ancient example, and how far should regard for precedent be carried? the answer ought not to be hard to find. In the first place, whenever our requirements are similar to those of our forefathers, it is plain that we cannot do better (considering that we are working in a borrowed style) than follow the precedent their works afford. In such a case it is impossible to adhere too closely to ancient models; they are an inexhaustible source of instruction, and happy are we when we can draw directly from it. And in the second place, although many of our modern requirements are novel, and have no precedent in the middle ages, and although it would be vain to seek among the forms of Gothic art for one that will exactly meet those requirements that are peculiar to ourselves, yet even in such emergencies as these it is in Gothic art that we shall find the safest precedent for our conduct, in its general principles of design, though not in the actual forms. True, Gothic architecture gives us no example of the way in which it would have fashioned the great engineering or mechanical works of our own day; it was never called upon to meet such require-

ments. But, on the other hand, the whole history of Gothic architecture is nothing but a record of novelties encountered, of unforeseen difficulties met and surmounted, of the constant self-adaptation of the style to the progress of society, the change of manners and habits, and the birth of fresh ideas and requirements. England under Henry VI. was very different from England under Henry II., and yet the art of the fifteenth century was derived naturally and regularly from that of the twelfth; it resulted from the application of the same principles to the requirements of a different age, and was in fact the same style under different circumstances. Let us proceed in the same way, and there is no reason to doubt that a style will be developed, suitable in every way to modern society, differing, perhaps, from twelfth or fifteenth century Gothic as much as those styles did from each other, but still thoroughly Gothic, and the lawful offspring of that system of art which is coeval with modern civilisation, and which kept pace with it in every advance it made from the tenth to the sixteenth century.

Such, however, is not the procedure of those

modern architects of whom we are now speaking. They cling to the exclusive use of such architectural forms as are to be found in old Gothic work; and when a novel requirement forces itself upon their attention, they either suppress it or else coax it into apparent consistency with precedent. Much in the same way in Renaissance architecture, since there is no ancient example of a chimney, and since chimneys cannot be avoided, Sir W. Chambers advises his reader to make his chimneys in the shape of vases or obelisks, forms for which there is classic precedent, though they were designed for a different purpose. Hence this, too, is a kind of formalism, or observance of the letter rather than the spirit, differing from the first kind in being the result, not of ignorance and indifference, but of choice and deliberate intention.

One way in which this excessive attachment to ancient example shows itself is by the refusal to use modern improvements in the mechanical arts and manufactures. For instance, the purist in Gothic will generally insist on glazing our windows with small panes of glass fixed in lead-

work, diamond-shaped, rather than with the larger panes of which modern glass manufacture admits. He ignores the fact that a better sort of glass exists, and uses the old-fashioned lead glazing, perishable, expensive, and apt to leak even when new, simply because it was the only method known in the middle ages. Why, if one had given a crate of plate-glass to a mediæval architect, he would have been transported with delight, and never afterwards satisfied with the clumsy expedient of lead-work. Not that lead glazing is to be absolutely condemned: when arranged into such elaborate figures and beautiful patterns as we see in many English and Continental churches (at Bayeux Cathedral, for instance, and very commonly in the village churches in Champagne), it forms a very pretty and effective mode of making the glazing decorative, second only to stained glass; and for stained glass lead-work is, so far as we at present know, indispensable. But in these cases it is adopted for a special reason, and becomes a mode of ornamentation; this is a different thing from holding lead glazing to be a necessary part of Gothic architecture,

and considering it abhorrent to the style to use any other method. On the contrary, it may be maintained that it is most un-Gothic to use lead lights when there is no special reason, such as we have just alluded to, for using them, and when better may be had.

It is indeed wonderful what inconvenience and expense men will incur for the sake of precedent. Many architects will purposely contrive those parts of a design in woodwork which a modern workman would naturally wish to turn with a lathe or run with a plane, in such a manner as to defeat the workman's intentions, and compel him to work the whole by hand instead; simply because, for want of proper tools, work of this kind was often done by hand in the middle ages. Now such instruments as a turning-lathe, or a plane for running mouldings, if well considered, will appear to be of the very greatest value. They exactly perform the legitimate function of machinery, which is to take off our hands all that uniform and monotonous kind of work which requires to be done in large quantities with little variety. The more we can substitute mechanical contrivance for hand

labour in those kinds of work which are of a purely mechanical character, the better. To make a man execute such work as this by hand, when he might employ a machine instead, is to degrade him to the level of a machine. The use of machinery is objectionable only when it is introduced into art work of a higher kind, where it is indispensable that the thought of the artist should be easily traced, and that the meaning touch of his cunning hand should be visible everywhere. To set a man to chip a block of marble into a column, or to shave a piece of wood into a baluster, when both one and the other might have been turned in a lathe in a twentieth part of the time, is as wanton a waste of human labour as could well be devised.

The use of arched windows in our houses is another inconvenience which purism forces upon us. Yet nothing can look worse under a modern flat ceiling than windows with pointed heads; and certainly nothing can be less convenient. The advantages of the ordinary English sash—the only way of constructing a window that can be thoroughly relied upon to exclude English

weather, and the best contrivance ever devised for regulating the admission of fresh air—are so great that the purist dares not reject the use of sashes, even though they were unknown in the middle ages. But it is impossible fairly to fit a sashed window into a pointed or even a semi-circular arch: sashes, to work well, must be square; and hence the usual expedient is to make the sashes and frames square, behind the arched head of the window, a method which not only reduces the arches to a mere sham, masking the real form of the window, but also so weakens the arches and mullions, by causing them to be cut away at the back, as to be highly unconstructional.

The complaints that one often hears of the inconvenience of churches with nave, chancel, and aisles on the conventional Gothic plan, and the inconsistent patience with which this alleged inconvenience is tolerated, furnish another example of the weight which precedent carries. One hears men complain that a Gothic church is unsuited to modern ritual, that the pillars obstruct sight and sound, that the chancel arch cuts the church in two, and so on; and yet one

finds these same men when it falls to their lot to build a church doing it precisely in the ordinary way, not perhaps altogether unrepiningly, but yet with a certain self-complacency at the thought that they have precedent on their side, and that their church, though to their taste uncomfortable, is 'en regle.' * Worst of all, they sometimes attempt a compromise, retaining indeed the obnoxious pillars which they might have dispensed with altogether had they possessed sufficient resolution, but making them of slender cast-iron tubes instead of stone, a mode of construction as insecure as it is hideous and unnecessary.

Not less strange is the practice of Evangelical congregations, who object to the separation of clergy and laity, but persist in building chancels to their churches; although the essential idea of a chancel is that of a place set apart for the ministering body, and although there is no other meaning or purpose in distinguishing it from

* Wren and his school knew how to build stately and beautiful churches without any of these inconveniences; and such an example, but that they lack the hardihood to follow it, might, one would think, suggest to the complainers a way of escape from their difficulties.

the rest of the building than this one of distinguishing its occupants from the rest of the congregation. Here too we find a compromise, as in the case of the cast-iron pillars; the objectors want the courage to dispense with a chancel altogether, which would seem the natural plan,* but they sternly insist that the chancel shall be small, that it shall not be raised above the nave by steps, and that it shall not be occupied exclusively by the choir and clergy. The exquisite inconsistency of this needs no comment.

It is even more curious to see dissenting bodies, to whom a real chancel is an abomination, deceptively arrange a vestry or schoolroom at the end of their chapel so as to look as like a chancel as they can manage to make it.

It is to the same school of purism and precedent that we are indebted for the 'Gothic' lettering that we cannot read; the 'Gothic' fire-places that will not draw; the 'Gothic'

* Here again the plan of many of Wren's churches might serve for an example. Besides them, however, there are many old Gothic churches without chancel arch, or structural division of any kind between nave and chancel.

lamps, candlesticks and salvers that look like chalices and patens in disguise; the 'Gothic' furniture which fatigues us with its clumsy weight, and hurts us with its uncomfortable knobs and angles; and the 'Gothic' wall-papers, whose insipid and prudish stiffness makes one sigh for the old-fashioned wall-papers back again with their posies of honeysuckles, rosebuds, and forget-me-nots.

But the worst result of Purism is the imitation which it has produced of the peculiar archaicism of Gothic painting and sculpture; that affectation of mediæval manner which ruins nearly all we do in these arts when we attempt to combine them with Gothic architecture. Most Gothic architects think that men, beasts, and plants must be pourtrayed, not as we see them, and as nearly to the life as we can, but exactly as we see them represented in the works of the middle ages. Consequently, although we know very well how men and women, birds and beasts, leaves and flowers look to our eyes, and though we do at other times carve and paint them faithfully enough, yet, when architecture is concerned, we choose to represent them in

what we know to be an unnatural and grotesque way; and the paintings and sculptures which we put upon our Gothic buildings are, for the most part, imitations not of nature, but of the paintings and sculptures of the middle ages.

Now this mediæval art, although imperfect (at least in northern Europe, of which alone we are now speaking) was thoroughly noble, because it was a sincere attempt to represent nature. Its excellence is in exact proportion to the degree in which it approaches Nature, showing that the artist understood her; and its defect is in exact proportion to the degree in which it departs from Nature, showing that the artist appreciated her imperfectly. The best mediæval sculpture is that in which there is most nature and least mediævalism, such as that at Rheims, and in the glorious north and south portals at Chartres, where many of the figures are scarcely inferior to classic models in truthfulness, and where the foliage is cut with a fidelity to natural form, and at the same time with a regard for the nature of the material that place it among the very

highest attainments of art, and make it the despair of modern artists.

If then the excellence of art depends upon its obedience to natural law and intelligent imitation of natural form, if Gothic and classic alike are good so far as they are natural, bad so far as they are mannered and conventional,* how indefensible must the practice appear of those who make it their particular business to study and imitate that side of ancient art on which its defects lie, and who fail to see that energising progressive element in it which constantly aimed at the acquirement of fresh truths and the dispersion of the mists of ignorance. Mediæval art was imperfect, and in a measure barbarous, because from circumstances it could not be

* The term conventional may be used in two senses; first, to express such a departure from nature as is occasioned or made necessary by the difficulties naturally presented by the materials employed or the proper way of working them: secondly, such as arises from the imitation of the work of other men, either because it is fashionable, or because the workman is too indolent to go through the process of abstraction which is necessary for the right sort of conventionalism. It is in the second sense that the word is here used in the text.

otherwise : the art of our modern mediævalists is imperfect and barbarous from deliberate choice. And since the men of this school study not the natural object, but the copy of it, they come to study the peculiar manner of the copyists rather than their intention. They catch that antiquated manner of Gothic work which is apparent on the surface without always catching its meaning, which must be looked for deeper ; and hence the modern copy is often a caricature of old Gothic, twice as conventional, and twice as mediæval. In nothing is this conscious and voluntary conventionality shown more disagreeably than in that fashion of solemnly fooling in complete mediæval trim as it were of motley, cap, bells, and bauble, in which some modern artists delight. There is a peculiar, and for many men an irresistible relish in the quaint turns of thought and expression which abound both in the art and the literature of olden time, and give a humorous turn even to compositions that were intended to be serious. It is difficult to say how much of the enjoyment with which we read an old ballad is due to the poet's design, and how much to

the accidental piquancy with which its age and strange old-world modes of thought and diction have invested it. And yet it is most important for us as students to distinguish the real work of the poet from the mere accidental effects produced by differences of time and manners. The quaintnesses of expression that make us smile are quaint only to us; they were not funny when they were new. A mediæval joke cooked up again with all the accessories of obsolete dress and language, has quite a different flavour for us from that which it was originally meant to have: *then*, men laughed at it in earnest, just as we laugh at a modern witticism: *now*, it amuses us in great measure by its old-fashioned air and odd turns of expression unlike our own which give it an accidental raciness; and we laugh partly with, and partly, though not unkindly, at the author. Yet though this humorous aspect of Gothic art is purely accidental, and does not really belong to Gothic art at all, it is often seized and impressed upon modern work as if to give it that last touch of genuineness which makes the copy worthy of the original. Nothing can be duller than this forced and

unreal kind of humour, which plays at mediævalism, delighting in representations of fantastical processions, incredible monsters, quaint beasts and birds, mock legends and myths, allegories without a lesson, and emblems without a reference, the whole adorned and illustrated by fragments of old rhymes, or imitations of them, written in black letter and with antique spelling and abbreviation, barely decipherable by modern man ; the leaden facetiæ of pedantry.

The deliverance of our revived Gothic art from the yoke of mediævalism is a task that should excite, and will certainly tax to the utmost, our best efforts. Nothing interferes so mightily with our chance of success as that antiquarian spirit in which many, perhaps most, of those who are interested in the revival approach the subject. The *letter* of the style is not for us ; we cannot, we ought not to wish to revive it : the *spirit* of it is what we have to catch, and this we shall never do so long as we confine ourselves to blind unreasoning 'Chinese' copying of old examples. At the very outset of the revival of an old style, no doubt we

cannot but copy as closely as possible; at that stage of our work the nature and principles of our adopted art are as yet unknown or only imperfectly understood, and the selection and discrimination which afterwards become imperative, are not yet within our power. But Gothic art is not now new to us. It is time to begin to distinguish between that which is merely *archaic* in it, and that which is *vital*; between that which is proper to the middle ages only, and that which is suitable for all ages including our own. There is much in Gothic art that resulted from conditions of society that have now passed away; all this we may dismiss from our practice. There is much too that arises from the imperfection of our forefathers' knowledge concerning many things that are now better understood; all this we must modify as our better information directs. But there is more, far more, in that noble Gothic art of the past which is true for all time, and which must form the root of any style of art that will ever spring naturally out of English soil. It is this part which forms the essence of the style, and in keeping it we keep its best, its vital part;

what we have dismissed were only its accidents. From the fact that Great Britain belongs to Anglo-Norsemen, and lies between the fiftieth and sixtieth parallels of latitude, it follows of necessity that her architecture must be Gothic of some kind or other, whenever she has an architecture worthy of the name : but the Gothic of the future will be Gothic without mediævalism, and the sooner we shake off our antiquarian method of practice and go to work like intelligent beings, thinking for ourselves, doing what we do with a meaning of our own, the sooner may this Gothic of the future be looked for.

CHAPTER III.

AFFECTATION OF ORIGINALITY.

It is not only by the formalism and purism described in the last chapter that the progress of our revival will be retarded, it is as bad to try and force on the development of a new style to which we look forward, as to hang back when there is an opportunity for a step onwards. It is not by restlessly casting about for novelty that we shall improve our position, but by sober and intelligent work on some regular method, by which means the deficiencies of the existing method will be discovered, and those improvements suggest themselves which will result in the development of a better.

The new style will not be attained by any violent and sudden alteration of the old one, but by a gradual and insensible growth. The adopted art does not fit; it galls here and chafes there; and those instinctive half-unconscious movements by which relief is sought, and

those minor alterations by which it is gained, though trifling in themselves, in the end give to the style a form differing more or less widely from the old one, though, in the main, it will continue the same style still. In each particular where inconvenience is felt, the successful effort to remove it forms, in fact, one step onward to the end. Perhaps it is only that some old tool is changed for a new one; or that old difficulties are met by modern discoveries which give a straightforward and simple way to do a thing that could heretofore be reached only by a roundabout and complex one, and so old modes of construction yield to new, as, for instance, when we use straight iron girders instead of piers and arches; perhaps some material is brought into more general use by a cheaper and better way of working it; or the increase of commerce brings materials to hand which were before almost or quite unattainable; or improved means of communication and transport, by making it unnecessary to use always the local material, lead to a more uniform method of design and to the gradual extinction of those provincialisms in Art which we see in the archi-

tecture of the middle ages, but which it would be pedantic and inconvenient to insist upon now.* To these causes must be added the change of domestic habits; the spread of the comforts of life to a lower grade of society; the improvements suggested by science and humanity; the better knowledge of Nature resulting from closer acquaintance with her; and many more. These are some of the many causes which are constantly at work when art is living and healthy to keep it in a state of progress and development. It is by this petty altering of particulars that the grand change is to be produced; and it is to these minor modifications that our efforts must be confined; we cannot do more without risk of interrupting the natural course of events. The result will work itself out; we cannot foresee it, and therefore cannot anticipate, nor help it forward, except indirectly.

It follows then that no good effect can be

* It seems inevitable that civilisation as it extends must sweep away provincialisms in art as well as those in language. It is consistent with the spirit of the age that this should be so, and yet it is hard not to regret it.

produced upon the progress of art by deliberately aiming at novelty; because change ought to follow not upon choice, but upon reason and necessity. Yet nothing is more common among those who practise Gothic architecture at the present day than an affectation of originality, a contempt for ordinary methods and forms simply because they are in common use, a preference for strange and fanciful ways of doing things, and a determination that the thing done shall, at all hazards, be original. This fatal resolution follows upon a total misunderstanding of the real nature and office of that quality which we call originality.

To be original in art is not to be what is generally understood by the term 'inventive.' It is not to be '*creative*,' for it has been said that there has perhaps never existed a form in art which is purely of human invention, and not imitated, though it may be remotely and indistinctly, from some natural object. Art is an expression of the recognition by the artist of natural fact. Originality in art may not improperly be defined, therefore, as the discovery and representation of fresh facts in Nature

which have escaped or been neglected by other artists. And among these natural facts must be included all those varying circumstances to which we alluded above as moulding the history of art, and influencing its development—for they are all the result of natural causes, and depend upon the action of general laws. Originality is that faculty which observes the birth of fresh necessities from day to day, and modifies cotemporary art so as to satisfy them; which takes note of the varying current of national thought and sentiment, and modifies cotemporary art so as best to illustrate and reflect them. It is, in fact, that element of progress in a living and healthy style, which prevents it from ever standing still, and leads it constantly onwards, concurrently with the progress of the age in other matters.

Now, although it is certain that all art of the highest kind will bear the stamp of originality, the mere presence of originality is not enough to ennoble art. A great artist will not only be led by his study of Nature to the constant discovery of something fresh in her, but he will choose among the mass of his discoveries, and

represent those natural facts only which are fit for artistic purposes. Not every quality in a natural object is equally fitted for representation in art. Setting aside those which it is obviously impossible to represent, there remain many which are either wholly unsuitable, or comparatively so. It is here that the need of judgment and taste becomes apparent. In illustration of this we may refer, as a familiar instance, to the way in which foliage has been sculptured at different periods in the history of architecture.

Natural foliage has two distinct characters, which though they meet in every plant that grows, seem in some measure opposed to one another: stiffness and springiness on the one hand, softness and flexibility on the other. In certain styles of architecture the carver seized upon the attribute of stiffness, and strove to give it full expression in his representation of foliage.

The Corinthian acanthus, and the versions of it in Byzantine and Romanesque art, and in the earliest Gothic of the twelfth and part of the thirteenth centuries, are examples of foliage carved with this motive.

In other styles, especially in the later Gothic

styles, men preferred the attribute of softness and flexibility, and their sculpture expresses this rather than the other quality.

Now, in both cases, the artists detected and tried to represent certain qualities which are natural to foliage, and consequently both have an equal claim to be called original. But one is original in a higher and better way than the other, because the former set of attributes are nobler than the other abstractedly, and also are more expressive of the hardness of the material, and of the strength and solidity proper to an architectural work. The rudest bit of Romanesque foliage, with its strong vigorous sprouting leaves full of life and power, is nobler than the more elaborate but languid naturalesque foliage of the fifteenth century.*

Merely to be original is not then necessarily a

* Of course both styles in their extreme instances fall short of excellence; neither set of attributes ought entirely to be overlooked. It is better to err on the side of severity rather than on that of voluptuousness and weakness; but the sculptured foliage of the thirteenth and part of the fourteenth centuries has shown that it was not necessary to fall into either extreme, the vigour of natural foliage being then expressed without severity, and its softness without weakness.

recommendation to a work of art. Its originality must be of that nobler sort into which right judgment and taste enter no less than knowledge and imagination. The first distinction then to be drawn is this one of quality.

But originality admits also of infinite shades of degree, differences in quantity as well as in quality. There is the originality of such poets as Dante and Shakespeare, and such artists as Giotto, Nicola Pisano, and Buonarotti, which was so great as to affect the history of letters and art for all future time. But there is also the originality of lesser men, whose works never seem to breathe the spirit of inspiration, but are, nevertheless, full of freshness and individuality, and are therefore truly original, though in a less degree.

It is the unequal degree in which artists are gifted with originality that has divided art into those various schools which have flourished at different times. Great men formed a school, and lesser men walk in their steps. But the humble followers of a school do not necessarily forfeit their independence. They accept the grand rules of their school as the best they

know, but at the same time they (at least, those of them who have the souls of artists) work like free men, allowing their fancy and intelligence free play. How many pictures of the Holy Family by early Italian artists does one know in which the same arrangement, the same attitudes and circumstances, and even the same colouring, are repeated with little variation, which, nevertheless, are one and all of them good and original works of art. However much alike they may be, each one is pictured in the memory distinctly, vividly, and without confusion. In spite of the mannerism which he shares with the rest of his school, the true artist will always give to everything he does a feeling and a character that come from himself, and make it an original work. The greater the artist is, the more conspicuous, of course, is that part of his work which is his own, and the less so that which is common to the school; and in the greatest men of all, the original element is so strong that they break away altogether from the tradition of their school and found a new method of their own, which attracts disciples, and thus leads to the formation of a new school.

Although it has never been thought to diminish the merit of an old master that he belonged to a school, with modern artists the case is somewhat different. Either because a high-pressure rate of progress is looked for in every field of enterprise, or else because men generally are so ignorant of the true principles of Art, and so little sensible of its finer and more delicate shades of difference that they cannot detect originality unless presented in the coarsest colours, most of those who pretend to be interested in such matters are disposed to be very exacting on this score.

The public indeed are principally to blame for the affectation of originality in modern work. The popular cry for the immediate invention of a new style of architecture has had a great deal to do with the extravagancies of modern buildings. The world forgets the difference of quantity in the original gifts possessed by artists, and would have their works, all alike, greatly and startlingly original. It is not in human nature to satisfy this requirement. The utmost an artist can do, however great he may be, is to *hasten* the development of a new style; he

cannot invent one. But it is not every man who must expect to do even this much, or to be able to trace any sensible result from his individual labours. The majority of artists are not men of immense powers, and not a few are driven by this unreasonable demand into quaintness and 'bizarrerie;' and unfortunately such work too often succeeds in pleasing the public mind, unenlightened as to the difference in quality between true and false originality.

There are then two qualities which pass for originality—the originality of genius and the originality of vanity; that of a man who has something new to say, and that of one who has nothing, but pretends to have. By what tests are we to know the real and distinguish it from the false?

In the first place, really original work may be distinguished by its greater simplicity and straightforwardness of manner.

A man who has no original ideas, or at best but a dearth of them, but who, nevertheless, wishes to appear original, has no resource but to seek out quaint and strange ways of saying his old things over again, hoping thus to dis-

guise their staleness, and pass them off for new.

A bad actor, who has no real feeling for his part, and no real conception of the character he undertakes, falls to rant and spouting, that he may not appear deficient; and just so a would-be-original author or artist works in a violent and extravagant style to cover the commonplace of his matter.

The man of genius, on the other hand, he whose mind conceives really original ideas, is generally content to express himself in simple terms. He feels a sort of inspiration working in him, he burns with feverish impatience to express his thoughts, and he scarce stops to think of the words in which his ideas escape. His whole mind is occupied with the ideas themselves, not with the language in which he clothes them. He uses ordinary language and such as comes naturally to his lips. He knows that the ideas which his sentences convey are novel and fresh, and will give the stamp of originality to his work though expressed in the homeliest language. In short, it will generally be found that in proportion as the man's mind is vigorous,

and his ideas clear, the way in which he expresses himself will be simple. A man who feels strongly speaks plainly and simply, and a man who thinks clearly, as a rule, expresses himself clearly; indistinctness, confusion, or extravagance of language may generally be taken as significant of barrenness or indistinctness of thought.

This is not less true of art than of literature. All the noblest and most original schools of art have been marked by a simplicity of expression, a straightforwardness of manner, and an absence of affectation that contrast strongly with the character of the inferior schools. No one can intelligently study the best antique sculpture without being struck by its natural ease and freedom from affectation. There is no straining after effect, no extravagance of conception, no attempt to display the artist's cleverness and knowledge. Whether the figures are in repose or in action, there is the same simplicity and unpretending truthfulness. And all this is plainly seen to be connected with wonderful facility of design. There was no need to hunt about for subjects or dress up common-place

ideas in exaggerated forms to give them an importance not their own. The artist had genius to conceive brilliant ideas, and knowledge to enable him to mould and arrange them into form, and thus being thoroughly master of his subject, he could do no less than represent it to the life, and he desired to do no more.

But perhaps nothing marks the highest efforts of art more than humility in the artist; the absence of self-assertion in his work. A really great artist forgets himself in his work, just as a really great actor forgets himself in his part. No great result is to be obtained in any branch of human work without this identification of the workman with his work. As long as the artist thinks less of making his work true and beautiful than of making himself a reputation, so long will it be impossible that his work should be excellently done, nor will he in the end secure that reputation which he sought. It does not follow that a good artist is necessarily careless of the honours and renown he has honestly won, and which he has a right to enjoy as well as the man who is successful in any other pursuit. But though they may sweeten his hours

of relaxation, they will not interfere with his work. The moment he takes up the pencil or chisel he abandons himself, heart and soul, to his subject, and has neither eyes nor ears for anything else.

The vicious affectation of originality which corresponds exactly with what we call '*sensationalism*' in literature, often presents itself unmistakeably enough, but sometimes it exists in so subtle a form as to be by no means easy of detection. There are few modern buildings which are not in greater or less degree chargeable with it, and even those artists who are most alive to it, and most on their guard, are in constant danger of being committed to it through the force of the public bias in that direction, which they cannot always resist. The most simple and innocent instance of it consists merely in that overcrowding of a design with architectural features by which, more than by anything else, our modern architecture contrasts with the ancient art which it takes for its model. A modern villa has often as much architectural ornament as would have sufficed for a mediæval castle, and a single modern

village church more than would be found in half-a-dozen old ones. It was not by this luxury of adornment, by this abandonment of economy, chastity, and restraint that the most beautiful effects of old work were attained. Most men can call up in their memories the humble but altogether delightful picture of a rural manor-house, or modest village church, nestling snugly in yews and elm-trees, which they will admit possesses a poetry and an almost ideal perfection of loveliness that may be looked for in vain in the more ambitious efforts of modern art. If we analyse the design of one of these buildings, the first thing that will strike us is its almost parsimonious allowance of architectural ornament. It is true that such ornament as there is is exquisitely studied, and clothed with precisely that amount and kind of detail that satisfy the eye; but when we reckon it up, we are surprised to find how very little it has taken to content us. Here and there is a modest doorway, or a mullioned window delicately moulded, and perhaps gracefully traceried, not planted with much regularity, but placed just where it is wanted for use, never simply for

ornament. The greater part of the building is plain blank wall, perhaps of red brick, perhaps of flint or other coarse material, not picked out with painful margins of mortar trowelled in curly lines round each flint or cobble in the wall, as is the fashion of modern workmen, than which a more extravagant waste of human labour, and degradation of human thought, cannot well be devised, but spread with common mortar dashed over the wall-face, and smoothed with the trowel, letting the flints and rubble show through wherever their irregularities bring them to the surface. This expanse of plain wall, and the mountain of tiled roof that rises with sheer unbroken slope above are the canvas which nature paints with a thousand tints of moss and lichen, purple, silvery, and golden. On its broad surface the ivy climbs and the sunshine sleeps. The richest woven fabric of eastern looms is not more luscious in colour or more delicate in texture than the rude walling of a Kentish or Surrey cottage, as all who have ever tried to paint it will readily admit.

Yet though no person of feeling can fail to admire such a picture, there are few men who

pretend to the possession of good taste who would listen with patience to their architect if he were to put the design of such a building on paper and propose to produce it for them in reality in brick or stone and timber. The cry would be that the design had '*nothing in it*,' that it was bald, plain, commonplace, and uninteresting. The architect would be implored to put a little more character into it, and to throw in a little more dash and originality. This great blank wall, he would be told, should be cut up with windows, doors, arcadings, or what not; this simple sky-line must be broken with cross roofing; the roof, it would be said, was too large and heavy; the windows too few and irregularly placed; the walls should be relieved by buttresses to break the simplicity of their angles, and so on,—till the building, swollen with importance, and struggling under the weight of its architectural display, became a mere vulgar caricature of the ancient buildings which it professed to imitate. Modern buildings have, as a rule, no repose, because they have no great wall-spaces. Such wall-spaces as there are, are so broken up by the execrable

fashion of elaborately pointing the joints which is the pride of modern builders, that they offer no really flat surface at all. No sunbeam could sleep on such a wall, nor could any lichen grow there to any useful purpose.

Another instance of sensational work is furnished by the extravagant and eccentric mode of design which some architects habitually practise, and into which even better men than they are occasionally betrayed. Even the school of the Purists is not guiltless: it is notorious that the works of some of those architects who are most attached to precedent are among the most eccentric that have been executed in modern times. The principle upon which they have been designed seems to have been the selection from the remains of ancient architecture of the quaintest and most 'original' examples, and the reproduction of these on ordinary occasions; and it is interesting to observe how the artist has tried in this way to reconcile the apparent desertion of his principles with consistency, and to make novelty compatible with imitation.

Now mediæval art, we know, was an intensely original style, and original in the noblest way,

and was remarkable for that simplicity and straightforwardness of expression which is so characteristic of genuine originality. Indeed, perhaps the greatest charm of the style lies in the *naïve* simplicity with which it always avoided roundabout ways of doing things, and chose that which was most direct. We may be sure, then, that whenever we find Gothic architecture dealing with strange and novel forms and methods, there had arisen some especial occasion which made them necessary, some unusual circumstance, some difficulty to be surmounted that required the employment of peculiar means.

If modern architects imitated these unusual forms only under a conjuncture of unusual circumstances similar to that which originally suggested them, they would be making a very proper use of ancient example. But when we find an architect copying them in places where there was nothing to call for other than ordinary methods and forms, we may, I think, safely pronounce that he has been guilty of a vicious affectation of originality. He has no right to plead the authority of ancient example for what he has done. We might as well admit the

argument of a Renaissance architect, who when taken to task for making his chimneys like urns or obelisks, would refer us to Cleopatra's needle or the Warwick vase. We do not dispute his authority for the form but for the use to which he puts it. Forms designed for a special purpose are not adapted for general use, and the more appropriate they are to the one case, the more inappropriate they must be to the other.

It is not, however, from the Purists that we must expect the most offensive exhibition of this bastard originality. Their work, though it may offend against propriety, is after all founded on noble examples; it would be beautiful if it were not misplaced. But there are many modern buildings for which no such excuse can be made; they are the works of men who have no love, and seemingly no sincere respect for Gothic art, and who adopt it as they would any other that happened to be fashionable. There is also to those who do not understand the true principles of Gothic an apparent laxity in the rules that govern it; and this recommends the style to men who are anxious to get rid of all constraint from laws and systems, and to do only what

pleases themselves. Of all the buildings of modern architecture these are the worst by far. The most insipid and lifeless classic work never approached them for baseness. Classic at its worst was always 'genteel,' but these are downright and aggressively vulgar.

Every one must be acquainted with these strange buildings; they abound in London, where, indeed, it seems to be a matter of course that every house which is pulled down should be rebuilt in a more or less sensational style. There are at least half-a-dozen examples in the Strand; gigantic warehouses designed in this manner are rising up at every corner in the City; and the great thoroughfares which have lately been cut through the busiest parts of the town are absolutely lined with them. Villas and country-houses by the same school are springing up in all directions on the outskirts of our great towns, till there is scarcely an avenue left by which to escape into the open country without having to run the gauntlet of them.* The

* Probably no town in the kingdom has suffered in this respect more than Oxford, which is now surrounded by a perfect halo of ugliness.

architect of a building such as these seems to have resolved that if it failed to have any other claim to public esteem, his work should at all events be original, and unlike anything the world had seen before. The character of the design is *obtrusiveness.* Every feature seems meant to make the passer-by stare, and to call upon him to say whether it is not novel and clever. Not a stone in the wall but seems thrusting itself forward into notice in the hope it may catch your eye. The commonest architectural features are executed with as much fuss and parade as if there had never been an arch turned or a wall buttressed before. All sorts of necessities are created or imagined in order that the architect may have the opportunity of satisfying them; walls are filled with discharging arches where none need have been; mouldings and chamfers are made on purpose to be stopped; projections are devised for the sake of the corbels or brackets that carry them; and the whole plan abounds with queer breaks, starts, and irregularities, without there being anything unusual in the requirements of the building or site to occasion them. Such a building is ignoble, for

it has no repose, and repose is necessary to dignity. Everything about it is 'busy;' it fidgets one to look at it; nothing seems at rest. It is not even forcible, although every part, nay, almost every brick, is made as conspicuous and marked as strongly as possible. It is like a paragraph of which every phrase is underlined indiscriminately, and which, from having too much emphasis, comes to have none at all. Lastly, it fails to realize the hope that lay nearest the artist's heart, for it is not even original in the true sense. As the eye rises from the ground-floor through three or four storeys each surpassing the other in *bizarrerie*, till the climax is reached in the roof with its party-coloured slates, crowded dormer-windows, fussy ridge-tiles, the whole bristling with spikes, and alive with wriggling ironwork, one becomes conscious that one has not taken in a single new idea from the contemplation, or detected a single thought that could fairly be called original in the whole design.

No candid observer, after examining one of these unhappy buildings, can fail to see the motive that underlies its peculiarities. The

vanity and self-assertion of the artist are apparent enough. His principal object is to show his own cleverness. He refuses instruction, not only from bygone art, but from Nature herself, from whom everything good in art is derived. His design must be all his own; it must be original, and his idea of originality is that he should invent it entirely out of his own head, with no more reference to existing forms of art than if those forms had never been. Purism is wrong in studying art rather than Nature; pseudo-originalism in refusing to study either one or the other. The necessity of studying Nature is common to the artists of every age; that of studying bygone art is peculiar to those who like ourselves have no living representative art of their own; those only who are thus situated have any need to look behind them for a model. For us this necessity exists, and we should regard the remains of ancient architecture much as young traders would regard a vast capital or an exhaustible stock in trade, which had been got together by the industry of their forefathers, and with which they are at liberty to trade, and so to develope their resources still

further. All that they have to do is to continue to 'work the business' on the same true and honest principles in accordance with which it had been formed, and it will be certain to go on improving and yielding fresh returns. But these would-be-original artists who disregard the teaching of bygone art altogether, are like a man who, having inherited the business of a merchant prince, should prefer to start afresh with half-a-crown in his pocket, that he might have the credit of building up a business entirely from the beginning by himself.

It is the vanity which inspires the work of this school that gives it its peculiar baseness, and of all artistic errors it is the basest. An artist who sets up to be original and fails, is not so much disgraced by his failure as by his attempt. Those who fail in this way are not to blame because they are not men of genius; to be born without great powers of originality is so general a thing that it can hardly be considered even a misfortune: but they are to blame for relying on the feeble resources of their own unassisted intellect, and shutting their eyes to the teachings of past ages. And yet

ultimately the blame must be laid to the charge of the public, which expects too much in the way of originality from every artist. If the public taste were delicate enough to appreciate humbler efforts, and willing to be satisfied without grand and startling revolutions of style; if men could but be taught that simplicity is not destructive of originality, and that there is more that is really original in the plainest old farm-house of Queen Anne's time than in a whole 'park' of showy modern Gothic villas; very little encouragement would be given to the vicious affectation of originality. When will it be generally received, that to be original it is not necessary to be a Michael Angelo, or a Leonardo; that one may be original in small things as well as large; that there is more of this ennobling quality in a good study of grapes or oyster-shells, or birds' nests, or onions, than in half the ambitious pictures that hang on the academy walls? Those who know they are incapable of gigantic strides in art should not be ashamed of going by easy steps, nor should the world despise them for doing no more. Nay rather, it should be felt that the labour of these lesser men is no less

necessary in the field of art than that of the greater. The giants cannot stop in their stride to fill up every detail that is necessary to the perfection of a style of art, yet somebody must do it, or the work of the giants will be incomplete. Few sculptors could conceive a 'Moses,' or a 'Lorenzo,' but thousands can design new and beautiful arrangements of foliage in capital and cornice; and in a perfect style of art, perfection must be found in the smallest detail as well as in the grandest features; and perhaps, after all, if the 'Moses' or the 'Lorenzo' had never been called into existence, the world would not have missed so much as if those lovely wreathing leaflets of our Northern Gothic, carved by humble artists whose names are lost to fame, had never been wrought.

CHAPTER IV.

DISLOYALTY.

NEITHER by purism and formalism, on the one hand, nor yet by affectation of originality and sensationalism, on the other, can the true revival of Art be advanced. The disciple of one school stands still on the road for fear of going wrong; that of the other flies out into blind bye-paths that lead no-whither. Yet of the two it is not so bad to sin by too great attentiveness to ancient example as by too little: the Purist stands on the right road, though he stands still. Our only hope of progress lies for the present in our loyalty to the style we have adopted; although we must not disguise from ourselves the fact that it is not altogether fit for modern use. There is indeed nothing in this partial unfitness which need discourage us: we may even find in it matter for hopefulness. For it is the pressure of novel requirements, and the inconvenience that is felt from the inability of

the old style to satisfy them, which suggest those modifications in particulars, and those changes in detail, which result at last in the development of a new Art. It is this unsuitability indeed which gives the reason that justifies change ; and which suggests those opportunities for advance which the Purist neglects, but which those who value progress will eagerly embrace. The practice of Gothic architecture will prove instructive, not only when it is found convenient and suitable to modern life, but also when it is the reverse ; its very defects will serve as finger-posts to show in what direction to advance.

Evidently then, our first care should be to ascertain exactly its capabilities in order to expand them to the utmost extent ; and its defects, in order to make them good in the best way our modern acquirements will enable us. The style that we want, the Gothic of the future, must be one that will be universally applicable in our day, just as the Gothic of the past was in the middle ages. It must be one that will answer every want, and serve in every case, however humble and insignificant, however novel and unexpected ; for cottage as

well as palace, village church as well as cathedral; in short, it must be a national style into which all design will naturally fall; for this is what it is to be a living, historical Art. If, then, the old Gothic art is to be modified till it suits us in this complete way, we must without delay put it to the test of every possible requirement, and we must apply it *universally* to all our buildings: in no other way can we detect and correct its unfitness at each single point where it is unfit, and so develope it into a style that shall be universally fit. If Gothic architecture is only to be used now and then, for some buildings and not for others, the evidence of its unsuitability or the reverse to our circumstances will be only slowly gathered up; the pressure of those inconveniences which arise from the use of an adopted style will be rarely and accidentally felt; the necessity of modifying it, and the nature of the required modification will not present themselves forcibly enough to stimulate action; and the development of the old style into a new one will be proportionately retarded.

Now, Gothic architecture has never yet ha

the field entirely to itself since its revival. It has never been accepted as the natural style into which all design should fall as a matter of course. On the contrary, the commonest notion about it, frequently as it has been exposed, is that Gothic is an ecclesiastical style, unfit for ordinary domestic use. A very short glance at its history ought to be enough to dispel this notion. We have argued above that the form and character of each good and living style are the strict consequence and inevitable result of the conditions and circumstances of its history, and since nothing can be clearer than that Gothic architecture during the middle ages, was not confined solely to ecclesiastical buildings, but was used indiscriminately for buildings of every kind and degree and purpose, it follows that it must be expressive not only of ecclesiastical ideas, but of the ordinary ideas of common life in the middle ages. It is, therefore, impossible that it can properly be regarded as a merely ecclesiastical style.

As this mistaken notion has done so much mischief, it will be well, in order to expose it more completely, to trace it to its origin. It

may be explained by the circumstances which occasioned and attended the revival of the Gothic style: an event which seems rather to have sprung from mere dissatisfaction with Classic than from any rational conviction in favour of Gothic. To ordinary people at the time of the revival, the architecture then prevalent gave little or no pleasure of the kind that a work of art may fairly be expected to give; it did not appeal to the intelligence like a good picture or an effective statue; and the consequence was, that although men affected to admire the classic buildings of the day because they were told it would be in bad taste not to do so, nobody really cared about architecture at all, with the exception of those who were either artists by profession or ambitious of the reputation of 'Dilettanti.' At no other time in the world's history have men been so satisfied to build mere useful shells to live in, with such total abnegation of ornament and artistic design; at no other time have men seemed positively ashamed to confess by their work that they really liked a thing to be beautiful rather than ugly. Yet there were some who, though they shared the

general discontent with the prevailing style, resented the idea of doing without architecture, and it was natural that their thoughts should revert to that native and national art which classic art had displaced. I think, too, there may be traced in England, even after the dominion of the classic 'orders' was firmly established an undercurrent of rebellion, and an unwillingness to forget altogether the native style. Our Roman churches have all of them steeples as much like their Gothic prototypes as the new style would allow; and Wren even tried his hand sometimes at actual Gothic, as for instance, in the fine tower of St. Michael's, Cornhill. Whether the style was forced upon him in this instance like the Gothic plan for St. Paul's, or whether he chose it himself, does not matter for the purpose of this argument; in either case the fact remains, that somebody in our own country chose the Gothic style at a time when most of the world had given it up.

For a long while after Wren's time, however, although now and then, through a freak of eccentricity, a quasi-Gothic building was erected,

no serious attempt was made to introduce the style again into common use; and when at last the question of reviving it was raised, its claims were based on grounds that were quite beside its real merits. The author of 'The Castle of Otranto,' and his readers, admired it from a feeling of romance; because it seemed to belong to the age of castles and tournaments and hermitages, and all the mysteries and sentimentalities which were commonly associated in idea with those chivalrous times which it became the fashion to admire; and about which most of us go mad when as school-boys we first read 'The Talisman.' This sentimental view of the Middle Ages is, of course, not the true one. The lapse of time through which we regard them acts like the atmosphere through which we regard a distant landscape, and by which the view is softened and mellowed, its harsher and rougher features melted away, and its plain prosaic details elevated into the region of poetry and fancy. The nineteenth century viewed across the same interval of time will probably appear as romantic to the historian of the future as the twelfth century does to us. No age,

says Mr. Carlyle, ever seemed to itself to be an age of romance. Those who lived in the Middle Ages found the world as dull and cold, and the struggle of life as hard and monotonous, as many, alas, find it in our own day; the only difference being that the hardness and monotony were of a different complexion, and the hardships and knocks perhaps more a matter of physical and less of moral experience. Romance and sentimentality had no part in the creation of Gothic architecture; it was moulded to the forms under which we find it by carefully satisfying social or individual requirements, and diligently observing the stern necessities of convenience and economy. It is a sober work-a-day style, not a holiday one. Horace Walpole had no real perception of its true meaning: his admiration was founded on the accidents of the style, and his attempt to revive it consisted merely in the adoption of some of its superficial features, not of its true principles of design and construction. There was, therefore, no more chance of Strawberry Hill bringing about a revival of Gothic than of the Pavilion at Brighton introducing the general use of Hindoo

architecture, for one was as little Gothic as the other Indian. Both one and the other are mere ordinary pieces of building made smart with a few rags and tatters of the styles to which they pretend.

That which gave the greatest impulse to the revival of Gothic architecture was its adoption into the creed of the great religious movement which took place during the earlier years of the last generation. A powerful body of churchmen set themselves to work a reformation which included among its objects the better ordering of public worship, and greater attentiveness to forms and ceremonies, and to the aid which it was believed might be derived from religious symbolism. Those who followed this party insisted on the exclusive use of the Gothic style in their churches, church furniture and ecclesiastical appurtenances. They did this because Gothic architecture seemed to them intimately connected with Christianity, and Classic with Paganism. In every feature of Gothic architecture they traced some religious meaning. In the prevalence of the vertical over the horizontal line, in the pointed arch, in the taper spire that

points to the skies, they read the expression of a faith that looks heavenward and treads the earth underfoot.

This, however, is but another phase of sentimentalism only one degree less irrational than the last. The Gothic spire is only a beautiful and costly roof to the tower : an adaptation to that part of the building of the high-peaked roofs that crowned the other parts, and which were themselves necessities of climate. For true spires are never met with except in those parts of Europe where high-pitched roofs also occur. In Italy a genuine spire may be looked for in vain,* and yet the Italians between the tenth and fourteenth centuries were certainly not less faithful and religious than the English, or less disposed to symbolise their faith in their art. The pointed arch, again, was invented to reduce the lateral thrust of the vaulting, and make it more vertical, so that slighter walls and buttresses might suffice to sustain it. It was an

* The ordinary Italian campanile consists of a tower crowned by a smaller lantern, which sometimes, though not always, finishes in a spirelet, the least important feature in the design.

economical expedient, not a piece of fanciful symbolism ; for we find pointed arches used for the sake of construction in the same buildings in which round arches are used in the ornamental features, the builder evidently liking the round arches best, and only using pointed arches when forced by the necessities of construction. In the same way the vertical lines which predominate in Gothic churches arose from the convenience of making the solid masses of masonry on the ground as few, and the voids as large as possible ; and as the architect narrowed his piers, he thought not of the upright lines he was making of them, but of the clearer space and more open view he was securing on the floor of his church, and of the splendid field for stained glass that he was providing overhead.

But apart from symbolism, the high-churchmen found another reason for the choice of Gothic architecture, in its history. Although they nominally set up the primitive Church as the model for our imitation, they practically regarded the ecclesiastical system of the Middle

Ages with scarcely less favour.* It was nearer to primitive times than ourselves ; it was better known to us, and less impossible in our state of society than the church of the catacombs ; and when contrasted with the ecclesiastical condition of the last century, it appeared to its admirers to possess purity, earnestness, and simplicity. Thus the architecture of those times was to them a hallowed style ; it was invested in their imagination with a kind of traditional authority as having arisen in the days of Christian purity, while the Five Orders seemed to them connected with the corrupt and effete religious state of their immediate ancestors.

The use of Gothic architecture was consequently elevated by the High Church party almost into the position of an article of faith.

They considered it by its forms to symbolise Christian doctrine, and by its history to be connected with the system of the Christian Church. In both points it is evident they were mistaken. If the Gothic style were to pretend to be the only art in which Christianity can be reflected, it would stand condemned by its own history ; for

* See Preface to Dr. Arnold's 'Christian Life.'

while the Church remained in its primitive purity Gothic architecture was unknown, and the earliest Christian buildings were in the ordinary Classic architecture of their day. Gothic architecture did not come into being till the end of the twelfth century, when the Church retained few traces of the primitive model; the period of its perfect development was also that of 'the two most signal triumphs over sense and humanity, the establishment of transubstantiation, and the origin of the Inquisition.'* It can claim no connection either symbolical or historical with the primitive ideas of Christianity.

But further, not only is it not symbolical of Church doctrine, but it is not the exclusive production of any Church system whatever, either primitive or mediæval. It is true it was at first nurtured in the Church, because amid the turmoil and confusion of society during the eleventh and twelfth centuries it was only in the kindly shelter of the cloister that learning and the peaceful arts were able to live and grow; but it did not develope itself into a perfect

* Gibbon, 'Decline and Fall,' ch. lix.

style—it never shook off the traditions of that Classic art from which it was derived, it never emerged into an independent energising life till the thirteenth century, when it passed from the hands of the clergy into those of the laity. Till then all the great architects were clerks; since then they have mostly been laymen.

So far was Gothic architecture during the Middle Ages from being considered expressive of Christian doctrine, that it was used without scruple by Jews,* Turks, infidels, and heretics as well as by orthodox Christians: no man whatever his creed, conceived the idea of using any architectural forms other than those he saw around him. And yet it is tolerably certain that neither the Jews nor the Mussulmans of those times would have introduced anything into their buildings which was considered to symbolise Christianity. The Moorish architecture in Spain, though mainly an imported style, yet borrowed largely from the Christian buildings that it found in the country, and the

* See the 'Builder' for 1866 and 1867 for mention of Jewish synagogues at Prague, Worms, Frankfurt, and Bury St. Edmunds. See also Lindo's 'History of the Spanish Jews' for account of the famous one at Toledo.

Spanish architecture of a later date is itself tinged with the character of Saracenic art,* so that the style of the infidel and Christian acted and re-acted upon one another, and each became modified by the introduction of something that recalled the memory of a hostile creed.

Perhaps another reason why Gothic has been regarded as an ecclesiastical style, lies in the nature of the remains of ancient Gothic architecture. It is known to us chiefly by our churches. The constant change of the habits of domestic life from one generation to another, requiring constant cotemporary changes in domestic architecture, and the very common intolerance of worn-out fashions in things that are constantly under one's hand and before one's eyes, have left us comparatively few remains of domestic Gothic work. But such motives or occasions for change as these, seldom bear with much weight upon ecclesiastical architecture; and moreover, even in the simplest and most religious times, the generosity and fervour that will rebuild a church are ex-

* The same may be said of the early Gothic of Southern Italy and Sicily.

ceptional; so that it is not surprising that most of our parish churches should remain to this day in the Gothic style. It is probably from this that we have learned to connect the idea of Gothic architecture, however unreasonably, with ecclesiastical buildings, and to forget that the domestic buildings of the Middle Ages were in precisely the same style as their churches. How precisely the same it was, will be understood better the more we become acquainted with old work: the distinction of ecclesiastical and lay architecture by which even the Gothic style itself is subdivided now-a-days was unknown in the Middle Ages. A mediæval sculptor cut grotesques with as much freedom on the walls of a church as on those of a castle; he never hesitated to carve satirical or comic subjects upon stall end or miserere, and often did so with a breadth of humour that would shock modern delicacy even in a secular building. The ornaments which we find on the walls of domestic architecture are precisely the same as those we find in the cotemporary churches; nothing seems to have been farther from the artist's mind than that ecclesiastical work should

be specially treated. And nothing is more injurious to our modern use of the style than this distinction which it is attempted to set up, the effect of which is to confine at least one important class of modern buildings within barriers of the most unnatural conventionality.

Gothic architecture then is not the creation of any religious creed or doctrine. It is the offspring of modern European civilisation. It is Christian only because modern Europe is Christian. It is connected with the Church only so far as the Church enters into the composition of our social state as one among many elements. We know of how many independent and even conflicting elements this state is composed, and it is as absurd to trace the origin of Gothic architecture to any one of them *singly* as it would be to do so with our political constitution. The name '*Gothic*' which has been given to the style, is as good a name as can be found for it, if we take the first tribe that began to break down the fabric of Roman civilisation to represent the whole tide of German population that with successive waves swept it away, and replaced it by that of which our present civilisation

is the developement. The attempt which has been made to call the style '*Christian Architecture*' is founded on an entire misconception of its nature and history. For if the appearance of a new style must be traced to the influence of novel circumstances, we cannot but observe that Christianity, though the most important, is not a novel element in modern civilisation. It was more than 400 years old, and was the established religion of the state when the Western Empire fell, and yet nothing approaching Gothic architecture had come of it: it required the combination of other influences which were not connected with Christianity nor indeed with religion—the overthrow of a decrepid and worn-out society by youthful and growing races, and the subjection of old social systems to new—in order to produce the new style. It is not by its Christianity alone that the modern world differs from the old. Feudalism is equally strange to Christianity and to ancient civilisation; and so is democracy in the form under which it grew up during the Middle Ages, and is now generally understood. It may indeed be true that Christianity has encouraged

democracy, and even helped to give it that peculiar character which distinguishes it from the democracies of the old world; but modern democracy no less than Feudalism has an origin quite unconnected with Christianity. The three are totally distinct and enter as independent elements into the composition of modern civilisation, and all three have had their influence on the art in which modern civilisation during the Middle Ages found expression. It would perhaps be less improper to call Gothic architecture either '*Feudal*,' or '*Democratic*,' than to call it '*Christian*' architecture.

Unless, however, Gothic art had been taken up warmly and preached boldly by an earnest and united body of men, it is very doubtful whether it would now be, as it is, so far advanced as to threaten to put an end to the use of Classic altogether. At the very crisis when this party in the Church arose, the style was in want of some zealous missionaries to push it into notice, and to take advantage of the waning influence of Classic. Gothic was but little known, its nature and merits imperfectly understood: the real grounds which entitled it to support

were not observed, nor indeed were they discoverable without more attention than it seemed likely to receive. Fortunately, on other grounds, favour was extended to it; religious enthusiasm supplied the place of judicious criticism, and Gothic architecture was supported as vehemently for reasons that were false or only imperfectly true as it deserved to be for those that were absolutely true. Every lover of the style must feel that he owes a debt of gratitude to those zealous churchmen who have so much helped the cause he supports. The result has been that a disused and despised style has been raised from oblivion and put upon its trial: public attention has been given to it, and its nature and principles have been ascertained. But while we reap the benefits of this movement, let us not forget that it was based on misconception, and that the examination of Gothic art which its revivers provoked, has revealed enough of its nature to lead us to conclusions very different from what they imagined.

What then has been the practical effect of this misconception? So far indeed as regards

churches, the question of style is closed ; society has resolved that Gothic alone is admissible. He would be a bold and sanguine man who would venture in the present day to design or build a Classic church : everybody would look upon it as a strange and unaccountable perversity of taste, and to many it would seem almost an act of profanity. From churches the style has spread to all buildings that are ecclesiastical or quasi-ecclesiastical ; for bishops' palaces, parsonage-houses, and parish schools it is accepted almost without a question. But beyond this, it has won as yet no certain footing : it is forced to dispute over every building, not only with its principal rival, Classic, but with half-a-dozen mongrel styles which are neither Classic nor Gothic, and which combine the faults and miss the virtues of both. Men cannot as yet believe that Gothic is fitted for common use ; and having restored their old churches and built their new ones in what they are pleased to call Gothic, they think they have carried the style as far as it will go.

But, if the dead Gothic art is to be made to live again, and to give birth to a genuine

modern style, this is only the beginning of what we must do with it. If Gothic be, as we believe it can be proved to be, the only style that is fit to be adopted for modern use, our artists must devote themselves to it exclusively, and we must accept the results that flow naturally from such a course. Although we shall differ from the Purist in our views of the proper end and object of the revival of Gothic architecture, we must for the present, as a rule, work in the Gothic style as steadily, earnestly, and exclusively as he. It is only when we discover some reason for change, when we find it unsuitable to modern habit, that we shall venture to modify the old art ; and then, unlike the Purist, we shall eagerly embrace every opportunity of so modifying it, as a step onward towards the end we have in view. Gothic architecture must first be warmed to life again by constant and habitual use, and then by a natural growth it will develope itself into that form which is most suited to the habits and ideas of an altered state of society.

It is indeed in the ease with which such a system would relapse into purism, that the danger of the exclusive use of Gothic architecture

which is here advocated lies, and it will be well to point out at once one way by which we may very effectively guard ourselves against such a relapse.

It is evident that the changes by which Gothic is to be developed into a living art, will consist, first, in the gradual removal of archaicisms which clash with modern habits ; and, secondly, by the incorporation into it of modern ideas, and the utilisation of modern discoveries and improvements. We must therefore be prepared to quit old example, exactly at those points where the ways of modern and ancient society diverge, especially when the new paths take higher and more commanding ground than the old. And certainly the great and all-important point in which we differ from our ancestors who invented and perfected the Gothic style, and the one in which the advantage is altogether on our side, consists in our greater experience ; in the simple fact that the world is five or six hundred years older, and that we have to add to what they knew, the knowledge of all that has passed since they died, and the better knowledge of what happened before they lived. We have

before us not only the art of the Middle Ages, but that of nearly all other times ; and this consideration should suggest to us the advisability, nay more, the necessity of a judicious eclecticism in our work. Although keeping in the main to that particular style which we hold to be on the whole the most suitable, we need not and ought not to shut our eyes to the example of other styles ; and where we find that any style has attained greater perfection in its design, has approached nearer to Nature, and has interpreted her or rather our notion of her more truly than the Gothic style, we may be sure that this ought to be our model rather than more abstract and conventional imitations of Nature, even though they bear the genuine Gothic stamp. And from among all the various styles which we can survey from the stand-point of modern discovery, the art of that period which succeeded the Middle Ages, and unites them to our own time, will surely invite our attention more than any other. The teaching of the Renaissance style beyond all others is fairly open to us for instruction : its example may not be one always to be followed, but certainly it is not

one always to be avoided. It would be strange indeed if nothing whatever were to be learned from it, and if it might be blotted out entirely without the world being in any degree a loser, as the ultra Goths of the present day seem to think. It is true that a great deal of Renaissance ornament is not fit for incorporation into a Gothic design, nor indeed fit for use in any style : a great deal of it is mannered, conventional, and pedantic, and therefore as bad as it can be ; as bad as the sham Gothic of the present day, being in fact sham Classic. The more the ornaments of the Renaissance school partake of this character, the less will they be fit for adoption into our work ; and many of the purely abstract ornaments that one sees on the mouldings of a classic entablature are little better than the notchings and scollopings of the pseudo-Goth, and must be absolutely discarded on similar grounds. The merit of Renaissance art consists not in such features as these, which it owes for the most part to its slavish worship and imitation of the antique, but in that wonderful naturalism which the masters of this school attained in their decoration ; and in proportion

as the natural element in Renaissance art predominates over the conventional, so far does the work become worthy of our imitation. Work of this sort may be taken without scruple from any style in the world where it is found, and incorporated into our own without any danger of incongruity.

There is no inconsistency in advocating an eclectic system at the end of a chapter, the object of which is to insist on the use of one particular style. We urge, indeed, the decided adoption of Gothic architecture, but we would have it adopted with the full intention of moulding and changing it till it suits the altered circumstances of modern life; and in the increased opportunities we possess of learning and gathering up fresh truths from other styles of art besides Gothic, we recognise one of those circumstances by which we are called upon to modify our adopted art. If, then, it should be said, that Gothic under such a process will lose those characteristic features by which we know the style, and will therefore cease to be Gothic; and that it is idle to urge a scrupulous adherence to Gothic on one page, and on the next

the introduction of details from other styles, which will prevent our work from being in any style at all : we reply that Gothic may lose *all* those features by which we know it, and yet for our purpose be Gothic in the truest sense after all. It is on this point that we differ from the Formalist and Purist. They think that the essence of the style consists in the use of certain recognised and recognisable architectural forms and features. We hold that the essence of the style consists in the application of certain catholic principles of taste and utility; that the recognised forms and features of our ancient Gothic architecture, are only the result of the application of those general principles to the particular circumstances of England and Englishmen during the Middle Ages, and that the same general principles applied to the particular circumstances of England and Englishmen in our day may, or rather must reproduce Gothic architecture under a somewhat different form.

To the taste and judgment of the artist it must be left to decide what may be borrowed from other styles and grafted upon the Gothic stock without shocking us with a sense of

incongruity. Dr. Johnson, when he recorded in the diary of his French tour that the pillars of Noyon Cathedral are alternately Gothic and Corinthian, was not in a position to understand that there was anything extraordinary in his statement; but we who have learned to connect differences of style with differences of history and chronology, should at once be offended at a mixture of styles that would seem to show ignorance or disregard of such distinctions. There is but one safe rule, and that only a general one, namely, that in borrowing from one style for another, those features which are especially characteristic, which form the '*differentia*' of the style they belong to, should not be taken: consequently, since it is in its architectural features that the character of a style is most distinctly pronounced, it will be less from the architecture than from the ornamental and other details of kindred styles that we shall borrow in order to enrich that Gothic art, upon which the general design and character of all we do will be founded. If we avoid the salient points of difference, as we may very easily do, we shall be at no loss to find others at which extremely

distinct styles approach so near together as to admit of being harmonised, and intermingled. Truth and nature are the common ground upon which *all* good styles meet, and the standard by which they are all to be tried; and, consequently, different styles cannot approach this standard, without at the same time approaching one another, and letting it be seen how many more the points on which they agree are than those on which they differ.

If we turn again to Renaissance art in particular, as we may fairly do, for next to Gothic it has the best claim to be regarded as a native or at all events naturalised style, we may safely say that there is nothing in the best ornamental work of that style that unfits it for application to Gothic work. In the painting and sculpture of the early Renaissance which, especially in Italy, attained to almost unrivalled excellence, we see nothing but Gothic art further advanced towards perfection, differing from the earlier work only in superiority of execution and nearer approach to nature: while the architecture of the Elizabethan houses of England, by Thorpe and others, of the great chateaux of Touraine, and of

the palaces of the Lombardi at Venice, is thoroughly Gothic in treatment and sentiment whatever it may have gathered to itself of Classic details. It is, in fact, a style of Gothic architecture, in spite of the fact that it makes use of many forms of Classic origin. It is not with the *forms* of Classic architecture that the believers in Gothic have any quarrel; many of them possess a refined and highly cultivated beauty which can scarcely be rivalled, and by the side of them the best Gothic work must always look rude and rough. It is in the historical principles of Classic architecture that the secret of our objection to it lies. Our very admiration of it in its ancient Greek or Italian home obliges us, however reluctantly, to abandon the hope of naturalising it in its original form in modern England. The reasons why we admire it, are in themselves arguments why we, whose ways are not as the ways of Greeks and Romans, should not cultivate it; for the merit of ancient art, like that of all other styles, consists in its historical fitness, in its exact reflection of the men, manners, and circumstances of its own age. For instance, the peculiar

monotony that runs throughout ancient architecture, the ever recurring forms and proportions so slightly varied that to a superficial observer, one temple looks very like another temple, one column like another column, and all classic buildings mere repetitions of one another to various scales, are eminently reflective of the singleness of motive and the simplicity of the composition of ancient society.* Again, the costly and monumental character of the classic styles, which must always have unfitted them for use except in vastly expensive works, reflects with inimitable truth the social constitution of the ancient world : in democratic Greece it expresses the supremacy of the community over the individual, the merging of the man in the citizen, the popular aversion to the display of private luxury, and the pride of ownership which every citizen was encouraged to feel in the public buildings of his state : in

* Speaking of the civilisations of Greece and Rome, M. Guizot says :—'They seem to have emanated from a single fact, from a single idea; one might say that society has attached itself to a solitary dominant principle which has determined its institutions, its customs, its creeds.'—Hist. Civiliz. in Europe, Lect. ii.

Imperial Rome it reflects with equal fidelity the centralization of the empire in one dominant race, and that of the provincial municipalities in one dominant municipality, the metropolis, which they all imitated, both in their civil constitution with their senates and consuls, and in their material aspect with their forum, circus, basilica, theatre, amphitheatre, and baths, which often rivalled those of Rome herself in splendour. In the republics of Greece, architecture was used for the great national buildings of the State and for purposes of religion. Under the Roman empire it was used for the public buildings of a highly centralised social system, and to feed the luxury and express the magnificence of a splendid dominant caste. It was in consequence of these requirements that Classic architecture became what it was; and it is in them that it finds the vindication of its peculiar character. Classic architecture proper can only be executed with costly materials and highly skilled workmanship: it requires huge stones, massive walls, scientific architects and dexterous artificers; every form is expensive as regards both

material and execution; wealth alone, either public or private, can command it.

But where ancient society was simple, modern society is complex in the extreme: it is not based upon one clearly defined principle, but results from the tumultuous conflict of several hostile elements. Monarchical, aristocratical, theocratical, and democratical influences are at work among us, not striving like the political parties of the ancient world which of them shall master the rest, and assume the direction of a certain definite state policy, but all pulling different ways, each striving to set up a policy of its own with a totally different object from the others. How can it be supposed that the same style of art can reflect the ancient and modern worlds, constituted as they are thus differently: on the one side is clearness, on the other confusion; on the one hand simplicity, on the other complexity and turmoil; in the first, the calm and monotonous beauty of a classic temple, in the second the picturesque variety, and the intense struggling vitality that breathes in every stone of a Gothic minster.

The great masters of the early Renaissance, thanks to the Gothic school which gave them birth, while they were attracted by the beauty of the forms of ancient art, never fell into the mistake of using them as the ancients did. They made no attempt to force their mind into the attitude of a Periclean or Augustan master. The instincts of art were still fully awake within them; they worked naturally and used the materials of design which Classic art supplied, in the same way as they did those which their immediate forefathers had transmitted to them. Their columns might be fluted and tapered, and their capitals might be carved into acanthus leaves and volutes, and the cornices might be formed with modillion, dentil, and corona; but shaft and capital and cornice were all used with the same happy freedom as if they had been of purely Gothic design. Classic architecture, setting aside considerations of climate, is disqualified for modern use chiefly by its monotony and its costliness. Both these disqualifications were removed by the way in which the early Renaissance schools treated it. Monotony is the last fault that can be laid to the charge of their

work, for in variety and picturesqueness, it is at least equal to Gothic, and it often indulges in wild fantastic graces to which Gothic seldom condescended. Nor did Renaissance architecture in its early and healthy stages ever forget that its office was to serve the people, to be national, and of universal utility just as Gothic had been. The expensiveness of Classic architecture, which unfits it for being generally used, results from the largeness of the features ; the Renaissance architect removed this objection by reducing these features when he employed them to the size of the corresponding features of a Gothic design. And, consequently, since it is not in its forms but in its principles of design that the essence of a style consists, Renaissance architecture which used Classic forms on Gothic principles, cannot fairly be regarded otherwise than as a style of Gothic architecture.

It is true the time came when the Gothic element in Renaissance art dropped out, and when men aspired to classical rather than historical propriety. They did, in fact, fall into formalism and purism, and their work became

lifeless, meaningless, expressionless, the mere dull reproduction of forms and methods with which the modern English mind could feel no sympathy, and in which it could trace no reflection of itself. The work which was thenceforth produced, and which attained its bathos after the publication of Stuart's Athens when it became the fashion to attempt the hopeless task of restoring Greek art rather than Roman, has received quite as much abuse as it deserves. It had one especially lamentable tendency, resulting from the natural costliness of Classic work, namely, the introduction of the system of using false material. Setting aside this fault, and it is a monstrous one, I do not know that the Purism of the Classic school is more mischievous or absurd than the Purism of the Gothic school which has been described above.

No such faults can be laid to the charge of the Early Renaissance: it was as genuine and honest as the purest Gothic, and may fairly be classed with it as a part of the same style. If this is so, if the rich stores of Renaissance art, not only its architecture, but its decorative work also, are spread out invitingly before the

modern artist to be used at his discretion, his resources will be vastly increased and a ready opening made for progress, and for escape from the conventional way of practising Gothic. Give the artist liberty to study the great masters of Italian decorative art, and he will no longer paint his windows and walls with the mediæval grotesques that he now places there; let him know that he may without disloyalty to Gothic art take Donatello or Michel Angelo for his master, and we shall see no more of those conventional figures, passionless as dolls, tiresome with their hackneyed draperies and everlastingly repeated poses, which we know so well, and meet so regularly on every modern Gothic building.

If such decorative work as this of the fifteenth and the early part of the sixteenth centuries, which is perhaps the best that the world has ever seen, is to be forbidden to the Gothic school; if it is really so opposed to Gothic architecture that it cannot possibly be combined with it; if only barbarous and imperfect design is suitable to Gothic architecture; perish the style; it is not worthy of a moment's attention.

It is not so: and the artist who deliberately casts his decorative design into a style below the standard to which his knowledge reaches, because he has to apply it to a Gothic building, is altogether in the wrong, and is doing all he can to hinder the progress of that further development of art to which we ought all to be looking forward.

CHAPTER V.

ARCHITECTURALISM.

NOTHING in the region of art is more surprising than the very common incapacity of ordinary men, even of those who are, to a certain extent, acquainted with the principles of art, to form an accurate estimate of the value of an architectural design, or, indeed, to tell a good building from a bad one. Many men who can form a sound judgment on the merits of a picture will show at once that they are hopelessly at sea when called upon to criticise an architectural work. If they prefer one design to another, they are utterly unable to state any rule by which they have arrived at their decision: they judge on purely arbitrary grounds, and pronounce a building good or bad according as it hits their fancy or not, and seems to them what they consider pretty or ugly.

And yet there are rules: architecture, equally with the other arts, must be judged by the

standard of nature; like them it must be natural *subjectively*, representative, the frank expression of the mind of the artist and of his age; and it must be natural *objectively*, based upon the recognition of certain forms or qualities in animate or inanimate nature. It is true that the relation between nature and architecture differs somewhat from that between her and the other arts, and is not at first sight so apparent. Painting and sculpture deal with the representation of objects that can be seen and handled, and it is comparatively easy to judge when the representation is natural and true, or when it is not. Although the higher excellencies of the painter's and sculptor's work can only be recognised by the educated critic, the broad fact that it ought to be natural is evident to all, and the most ignorant observer will have tried it, though imperfectly, by the right standard when he pronounces it like or unlike what it is meant for. But it is the misfortune of architecture that it is seldom judged, even thus imperfectly, upon the right ground, because the reference to a natural standard is not so obvious. Nature never buttressed a wall, nor turned an arch; there is

nothing in her works that could have suggested a traceried window, or a vaulted nave; and it is not at first sight intelligible how she can supply a standard for architectural criticism. It is, in fact, not with the direct imitation of natural form that architecture is concerned, from which it is by its nature precluded, but with the observance of natural law. The architect must obey nature's laws of equilibrium and cohesion or she levels his building with the ground; he must consider the conditions of climate and other circumstances which she has imposed, or she makes his building uninhabitable.

It follows that all architecture must conform to these conditions to some extent; but the test of its excellence consists in its not only conforming but appearing to conform. When architecture is natural and good it confesses outwardly, by the simplicity and honesty of its constructional forms, that it obeys the natural laws that govern solid bodies; it shows, by falling into distinct national styles, that it appreciates and conforms itself to those natural peculiarities that divide men into nationalities; and within the bounds of each style it takes, in every building, those

varieties of form and plan which not only satisfy the conditions of convenience in reality, but do so openly, in such a way that the purpose and use of the building may be generally known from its architecture.

It may be gathered from this account that the rules of architectural criticism are not so obvious as those by which the other arts are tried. It is only those whose scientific attainments have enabled them to understand the difficulties that have been surmounted, and the conditions that have been satisfied, who are able to appreciate a great architectural work thoroughly. The abstract naturalism of architecture must, perhaps, always prevent it from being so popular an art as the others with the outer world ; and the architect himself will leave his work with a feeling of dissatisfaction on the same account : for the genuine artist will never be satisfied without a more direct appeal to Nature than the forms of architecture afford.

It is for these reasons that decoration by painting and sculpture is indispensably necessary to architecture. No good style has ever been contented to do without the direct imita-

tion of natural life by means of the sister arts, and no architectural design from which they are absent can take any but a very low rank in the scale of excellence. But further, it is not enough that painting and sculpture should be present to architecture, merely juxta-posed. The alliance between the three arts must be of the closest kind; the paintings and sculpture must be very incorporate elements of the building; they must be designed to suit the building and the building to suit them. The paintings must be painted on the walls, and must have reference in subject and treatment to the building and the builders. The carving must, for the most part, be cut in the solid stone of capital, cornice, and wall, and must be designed in accordance with the functions of each part; taking in the heavy-laden capitals the form of vigorous sprouting foliage; and in the string-courses and archivolts that of more delicate running leaflets; and on the broad, flat wall-spaces, where it is employed for decoration independently of the construction, imitating directly the higher life of men and beasts. And because truthful reflection of nature is the object desired, and because an

artist can only know so much of nature as he actually sees, this painting and sculpture must be intensely characteristic and representative of the artists and the age they live in. In other words, it must be historic.

Instances of this close and necessary alliance of painting and sculpture with architecture are furnished by all the noblest styles of art that the world has seen; and in proportion as the style was nobler, the connection was closer. In the earlier styles of Egypt and Assyria the three arts are so closely interwoven that it is difficult to dissociate them even in imagination. In Greek art the connection is not less close. Nature worshippers by instinct, whether under the Pantheistic forms of their older mythology, or the Anthropomorphism of the newer; whether, on the one hand, by the deification of sensuous objects, or on the other, by the reduction of supersensuous objects to the condition of visible matter, the Greeks could not but be naturalistic in their art. It is true their architecture surprises us at first sight by its simple and abstract character and its freedom from imitation of natural form; when the style was at its best,

not one of the constructional features of the building was enriched with sculpture. But it was probably owing to the very intensity of his perception of natural beauty that the Greek preferred to lavish his decoration on those parts of the design which did not play a principal part in the construction, and where, consequently, he would be more free to indulge his imagination. Nothing would satisfy him short of the downright representation of natural life in the most natural way, and of that life in its highest forms, those of gods and men, and the noblest of the lower animals. We owe to this temper of the Greek mind, the greatest school of sculpture that the world has ever seen ; great in its perfect naturalism, and great in its high idealism, that is, in the perception and choice of the highest subjects and the highest elements in the nature of those subjects. The architecture of such a building as the Parthenon was only the setting, rich and splendid indeed, and highly wrought,*

* Although seldom so plain and simple, architecture was perhaps never so highly finished. At the Parthenon, 'The margins of the joints of the columns from 5 to 9 inches within the circumference, and those of the vertical joints of the masonry of the walls and steps from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 inches

but the painting and sculpture were the jewels that gave the work its greatest value; and, conversely, Greek sculpture, like a well-set jewel, is not only beautiful in itself, but it becomes doubly beautiful if regarded in connection with the architecture in which it is set; neither the sculpture nor the architecture can be viewed alone without injury. Take the jewel out of its setting, and it not only loses the beauty it had gained by being well set, but it becomes objectless and useless. What can you do with it? you must put it in a drawer, and go now and then to look at it, just as we do with the Elgin marbles in the British Museum; and as for the setting, you cannot wear that either; its object is lost, and as you look upon it, you think more of the blank whence the jewel is gone than of the circle of gold that remains.

In Gothic architecture of the best period the connection of the three arts is, if possible, still closer, and their combination into one common

within are also united together with polished surfaces, which the Greek authors called *ἁρμονία*,' &c.—Notes to Stuart's 'Athens,' vol. ii. ed. 1825.

design still more remarkable. In an Italian town well known to English tourists, there is a certain shady cloister, enclosing an oblong space of ground, and forming together with it a public cemetery. It is thronged with tombs and monuments of all kinds, dates, and shapes; there are tablets on the walls, some plain, some enriched with precious sculpture; there are Roman sarcophagi ranged along the sides, in which Christian dust has dispossessed pagan; the very floor is rough with effigies carved in low relief on the pavement. The outer wall of the cloister is unbroken except by the two entrances, and here and there a little chapel; the inner is formed of an arcade of black and white marble arches, filled with tracery of great delicacy; the enclosed space is a quiet grass-plot, planted here and there with yew and cypress.

But that which is most remarkable in this building is yet to come. Except for the height of a few feet above the ground, which is occupied by the monuments, the whole of the blank wall, which forms one side of the cloister, is covered with most precious paintings. The

subjects are taken from the Old and New Testaments, saintly histories, and allegories; and the series forms, in fact, a picture Bible, in which we read the stories of the Creation, Cain and Abel, Noah and the Flood, Babel, Job, Abraham, Lot, Isaac, Jacob, Esau, Joseph, Moses, the Exodus and giving of the law, Joshua and David. Here, too, are the Magi bringing gold, frankincense, and myrrh; the life and passion of Christ, His Resurrection and Ascension. Last of all, the Archangels descend to call the quick and the dead to judgment, and to sever the sheep from the goats, while, hard by, the mouth of hell gapes to receive its prey.

So striking is this vast field of colour, mouldering, alas, in many places from the walls, but in others preserving all its original freshness, that it arrests the attention as one enters the building almost sooner than the architecture itself; and when one has become accustomed to both, one doubts whether to regard the cloister as created for the sake of the paintings, or the paintings for that of the cloister.

Behind this doubt lurks a weighty lesson: the architecture and the painting are, in truth,

parts of one common design, and neither can be criticised fairly by itself. This cloister of the Campo Santo at Pisa was designed with the intention that it should be thus painted. Take away the paintings, and the architecture, with its slender shafts and rich marbles relieved against bare, blank walls, would look meagre and meaningless enough ; or take away the cloister, and the paintings transferred to a museum would lose more than half their force and point. The subjects were all chosen by their artists with reference to the place and its uses. In reliance on the virtues and truths that were instanced on the wall, those who rest at its foot had lain down to die, taking the faith of Noah, Abraham, and Moses for their treasure, the cross of Christ for their hope. With how much more point does Orcagna's Last Judgment come home from its position on the walls of a cemetery, even to us moderns, for whom the allegorical and symbolical parts of mediæval art have comparatively little interest, and the literal horrors of a Dantesque hell no terror.

The Campo Santo affords but one instance

out of many of the intimate relationship between architecture and painting in Gothic art. The frescoes there are, perhaps, unrivalled for beauty and fitness, but Italy still contains many others on a scale nearly as vast; at Assisi, at Florence, are immense wall-spaces covered with frescoes by Cimabue, Giotto, and Masaccio. It is not too much to say that painting, as an art, was created by the demand for architectonic decoration in colour. Till architecture herself began to refuse the painter's assistance, easel pictures were unknown; Michel Angelo chiefly painted frescoes (it used to be said that there are but three well authenticated easel pictures by him, and the authenticity even of these has often been denied); and the greatest works even of Correggio, so late as the beginning of the sixteenth century, are his frescoes in the churches and convents of Parma. The earlier painters scarcely painted at all but on walls or else on furniture, such as triptychs, tabernacles, wardrobes, and bridal-chests. Painting was regarded as a natural mode of ornamenting every article of human construction, from the marble church down to the most ordinary piece of household furniture,

and was applied by the Italians of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries much as we should use veneer or gilding. It hardly existed at all without some material motive of this kind; a painting was undertaken because there was some object that had to be painted; the idea of an independent picture seems scarcely to have been understood. Hence the early painters were regarded only as belonging to one of the many trades connected with building; they ranked but little above the other artisans, and were paid by the day at wages not much above those earned by masons and carpenters.* Many of them were goldsmiths, actually handicraftsmen, and the early paintings, with their pure and delicate colours relieved on grounds of chased gold, are only amplifications of the art of enamelling in colour on metal.

* The Rolls of Edw. I., A.D. 1293–4, relating to the works of St. Stephen's chapel, show that the chief painter was paid 1*s.* a day; his assistants, 3*d.* to 7*d.*; masons, 4*d.* to 6*d.* The principal smith, 6*d.*; tilers, 5*d.*; carpenters and plumbers, 4½*d.* to 6*d.* The wages are the same in the Rolls of Edw. III., 1351. Extracts are given by Brayley and Britton, 'Ancient Palace, &c. &c. of Westminster.'

But if the painter of those days looked on the architect's walls as the legitimate field for his labours, the architect equally regarded decoration by painting as an element of design that was at his command, and one with which he could seldom dispense ; and while he conceived the stately aisles and lengthening arcades, he invested them in imagination not only with form but with colour, and peopled the walls with figures that breathed the spirit of the art and artists of the day.

But it was not only in Italy that Gothic architecture allied itself so closely to painting : coloured decoration was as important an element of design in Northern as in Southern Europe. Despite the ravages of the whitewasher, enough remains or can be discovered of the ancient decoration of our English churches to show that here too the use of painting was general. Indeed, I suppose that till the decay of the style, no building of any importance was ever raised which was not actually decorated with painting or intended to be so.* As we walk down the nave

* Except perhaps the Cistercian buildings. By the rules of the Abbey of Clairvaux, 'L'église doit être d'une grande

of our great Norman Cathedrals where all now is bare, cold, and colourless, and where there is little architectural ornament, we see in fact but half the design; we can form but an imperfect notion how the architect meant his building to look, and how it once did look when ceiling and wall were glowing with colour in geometrical patterns, or storied with legends, and wreathed with wild leafage amid which grotesque birds and beasts climbed and entwined themselves.

But if fresco painting was more sparingly and less successfully applied to architectural design in our country and in the north of Europe than in the south, there can be no doubt that glass painting was eminently characteristic of our Gothic architecture, and most essentially connected with it. This branch of painting, as it was practised in the Middle Ages, required less

simplicité. Les sculptures et les peintures en seront exclues; les vitraux uniquement de couleur blanche, sans croix ni ornements.'—Viollet-le-Duc *Dictionary*, vol. i. p. 269.

However, 'Le XIII^e^ siècle commençait à peine, que les Cisterciens eux-mêmes, oubliant la règle sévère de leur ordre, appelaient la peinture et la sculpture pour parer leurs édifices.'—Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionary*, vol. i. p. 278.

knowledge of nature and less artistic power in the painter, depending for excellence chiefly on the choice arrangement of brilliant colour, and the subordination of form. It was, therefore, much better suited to the capacity of our northern painters than fresco painting, for the Gothic art of Northern Europe produced no Giotto, Orcagna, or Gozzoli.

Decoration by stained glass was to northern Gothic what decoration by fresco-painting was to southern Gothic. Each of these modes influenced the style of architecture to which it belonged so forcibly as to affect the very design and plan of the buildings: the Italian adopted every modification of plan that would increase the amount of his flat interior wall-surfaces, and give more room for the painter's work; the northern architect gave all his attention to the production of a building in which the flat surface and solid wall should be as little and the voids for windows as great as possible; till at last in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the northern Gothic churches became mere frameworks of slender piers; lanterns of stone glazed with rich fields of painted glass, shimmering like

tissues of silver, or blazing with the hues of the sapphire, the ruby and the emerald.

The connection of sculpture with Gothic architecture was as close as that of painting. Sculpture seems by its nature even more closely related to architecture than painting : both arts use the same materials and work with similar tools and methods, and the mason's work often approaches the carver's so closely that it is hard to say where the province of one begins, and that of the other ends. Like painting, sculpture was called into existence in order to decorate architecture, and this continued to be its true office during the whole career of Gothic art. It was not till the sculptor, like the painter, was banished by the Renaissance architect from the natural field of his labours that gallery statues, like easel pictures, came into fashion. The nature of sculpture so clearly connects it with architecture, that it has suffered by this unnatural separation even more than painting : if ever there were a dead profitless art, the sculpture of modern times, with but few exceptions, deserves to be so called. In old Gothic work it is impossible to separate the sculpture of an

architectural design from the rest; the whole design was conceived at once in the architect's brain, and forms but one idea. In order to grasp its meaning, you must look at it in its entirety. Think of the cavernous portals of Amiens, Rouen, or Paris, or the porticoes of the transepts at Chartres, with the ranks of apostles and prophets that flank them, and the sacred legends in the shield that fills the head of the doorway, and the angelic host that crowd in the mouldings of the arch, as it were circling in wonder and awe round the mysteries into which it is said they desire to look; think of all this, and with the memory of it all fresh in the mind, imagine the sculpture banished from the design. What will be left to it? Not its architecture, for half the architectural character and meaning of the building will have fled away with the winged host you have dismissed.

It is unfortunately not uncommon to find a great portal of this kind actually stripped of its sculpture by some destructive hand: let us go and look at it, and there ask ourselves whether it is true that its sculpture and its architecture were independent and separable; whether, in

fact, what we there look upon is the architect's design complete and undisguised by the ornaments which the sculptor's fancy had superimposed ; or whether, on the other hand, the architectural completeness of the design was not inseparably connected with the presence of the sculpture, and whether it has not vanished together with it. Of the two western towers of Wells Cathedral, the northern has retained and the southern for the most part lost its sculpture ; and as we turn from the complete design of the one, and take our place in the cloister to view the other with its blank array of depopulated niches, tier above tier, the incompleteness of the architecture by itself will strike us forcibly enough.

Architecture then cannot be perfect unless painting and sculpture are associated with it : but mere juxtaposition of painting and sculpture to architecture is not enough to produce that sort of association that is wanted ; they must be combined, united, harmonised, and they must be all of the essence of the design. The works of the architect, the painter, and the sculptor, not only in Greek and Gothic but in all noble styles,

are combined into one general art. Properly regarded, these three arts are not three distinct fields of human labour, but three parallel channels through which the same current of thought flows, beginning in one common source, ending in one common stream; three modes of expressing the same ideas, subjectively one, though differing objectively in their choice of means and instruments. In the works of each great period of art, we may trace the same ideas, the same intellectual peculiarities, the same principles of design, and, in short, the same common style prevailing in every one—whether it be wrought with the trowel, the chisel, or the pencil.

If we turn to our modern Gothic architecture and inquire how it regards the arts of painting and sculpture, a glance shows us that the sister arts are not forgotten; that there are many modern buildings where all three are present in juxtaposition at all events, and to superficial critics, both professional and amateur, this may be quite satisfactory. But have they anything beyond mere juxtaposition; does the whole building, whether in its general mass or in the smallest leaf that is carved or painted on its walls,

bear the impress of the same ideas, and belong, in fact, to the same school or style ?

Let us take as an instance of modern work, a church which was built not many years ago in London, which is well known and deservedly admired by all who are interested in the progress of architecture ; and which, on account of its costliness and splendour, and the talent that has been expended on its design, is one of the most famous of our modern buildings. The architect, and the painter to whom the principal part of the decoration was entrusted, were both in the front rank of modern artists, and were selected probably because they belonged to the same school of religious thought, and were influenced by common sympathies and principles. It would perhaps have been difficult at the time when this church was built to have associated together an architect and a painter, from whose united work a more harmonious result might have been expected. And what *is* the result ? Simply contrast and discord. That part of the decoration which was designed by the architect himself, is hard, dry, severe, and abstract ; the design is sharp,

trenchant, and in parts even spotty. In that part which was decorated by the painter the colouring is soft and flowing, the treatment broad, and the general effect warm and subdued. So far as concerns unity and harmony of effect, the result is a failure.

Perhaps the most notorious failure of all is to be found in the decorations of our Houses of Parliament, where all sorts of incongruity abound. The simpler decorations in colour, the stained glass, the carving, and the fittings, all of which were designed either by the architect or by those who were employed by him or associated with him, are abstract, conventional, and in fact extreme instances of Mediæval Purism. The wall paintings, on the other hand, are, for the most part, in a totally different style. They are nearly all of them easel pictures in conception and design : they look as if they might have been hung in last year's Academy ; they have absolutely no relation to the architecture of the place where they are, or to the decorations that surround them ; and most of them, in spite of their individual merit, look quite out of place.

The inconvenience of using pure fresco painting, and the uncertainty of the various methods that have been proposed in its place, have rendered stained glass a more popular mode of decoration with us than mural painting. Glass-painting is essentially a decorative art, inseparable from architecture, for the glass implies a window into which it is to be put. Here then, if anywhere, we might expect painting and architecture to be of one mind; but if we have formed any such expectation, the first glance at a modern church whose windows are filled with stained glass will undeceive us. So far from the windows being in harmony with the architecture, they are not even in harmony with one another. Every donor of a window has selected his own glass-painter: half-a-dozen or more glass-painting firms have been turned loose into the church, to work their own sweet will on the windows respectively assigned to them. Every man has designed his work in his own shop, without any regard to the work of his neighbours; and, it is scarcely necessary to say, without any concern for the architecture of the building in which it is to stand. The collection

of windows forms as incongruous a medley as the pictures in a scrap-book; they contrast with one another on every point of colour, design, feeling, and execution, and they agree only in the general absence of any harmony with the architecture in which they are framed, and to which, under the happiest circumstances, only one of them at the most could be suitable. Independently of the badness of most modern glass-painting, which has indeed reached a bathos of awful profundity, the mere discordancy of the heterogeneous jumble which is the result when several windows are collected in one modern building is excruciating, more especially to those who know what effects can be produced by the use of stained glass on a proper method; who remember the church at Fairford, or that of St. Urbain at Troyes, which retain their original and cotemporary glass in nearly every window; or the cathedrals of Bourges, Canterbury, and Chartres, where so much remains that the whole can easily be imagined, where in each building the glass is throughout in one style, and exactly adapted to the architecture in which it is placed.

It would be easy to multiply instances of the want of uniformity in our art: the fact must have been observed by all who have given any attention to the subject. The reason is simply this, that the three arts have been so long dissevered, and have grown so estranged in method and purpose, that no sympathy remains between them: each art when called upon to join the others in a common work acts as if it were independent of and superior to them, or indeed as if there were no kinship or relationship between them at all; nothing to make the help of one art necessary or even appropriate to the other; and, of course, so long as they remain in this state they cannot be really combined to produce any satisfactory result.

In what direction then must we look for a remedy?

In the first place, before we can expect to reconcile the arts, we must reconcile the artists. They must be brought more closely together, a common understanding must be established among them, and common sympathy implanted. Unfortunately, the tendency of many of those changes in the way of practising architecture

which its friends are trying to bring about, is in the opposite direction, and if these changes should be accepted they will not fail to widen the breach that now divides the architect from those whom he ought to regard as his brethren. The attempt to raise or to lower architecture (for it may be regarded from two points of view), to the level of a profession will, if it succeeds, place a great and perhaps a fatal obstacle in the way of its improvement. Indeed, if it should ever come to pass that the practice of architecture were confined to those who were qualified by diploma or certificate, the architect, although he might become a member of a highly respectable profession, would have to abandon all claims to the title and character of an artist. Art cannot exist under any artificial restrictions of this sort: they stifle it, they are fatal to its very being. The greatest artists are precisely the men who break through academy rules and all the popular conventionalities of their day, which stand between them and nature, and oppose the free current of their imagination. Their freedom is an offence to ignorance and prejudice, though it fails not, sooner or later, to establish fresh doc-

trines, to found new schools, and to advance the art of their time one step onward. Had these men been required to pass the routine of examinations, and to qualify themselves for a diploma on the old stale principles, either they would have failed to do so, or they would have quenched the fire of their genius in the process.

To make architecture a close profession would be not only an extremely mischievous, but a reactionary measure: public opinion is setting in favour of greater freedom and expansion even of those professions which are now closed. There are signs that the closest of them all is beginning to relax its exclusiveness: the question has been raised, whether it is desirable to keep up the distinction between the two branches of the legal profession, and it is perhaps not difficult to foretell how this question, once raised, must sooner or later be answered. The attempt to close the practice of architecture against the general world is opposed to the progress of public opinion even if we choose to place it among the professions; on the other hand, if we regard architecture not as a profession at all but an art, let us claim for it the

same liberty which the other arts enjoy, and which is known to be necessary to their healthy existence. Imagine, for instance, the same restrictions with which architecture is threatened applied to the other arts of painting and sculpture. That kind of protection which it is thought the new system would give to the public against an incompetent architect, is just as necessary to guard them against an incompetent painter. The painter who sells a trashy picture robs his employer quite as much as the architect who builds an ill-constructed house. Let us suppose then that no man were allowed to sell a picture without a diploma from the Royal Academy. If demonstration were needed of the effect of such a prohibition, we need only refer to the annals of the Royal Academy within the last twenty years to see that the strict enforcement of academy rules upon our art students would deprive us of the most able and promising among them. To carry the absurdity to an extreme, let us imagine our authors subjected to the same rule: let us revive the penal statutes of Elizabeth and James in restraint of the liberty of the press; and let us restore those restrictions by

which Milton, before he could obtain the necessary license for the publication of 'Paradise Lost,' was compelled to submit the manuscript to the criticism of an archbishop's chaplain.

But supposing all danger from the introduction of such changes as these to be removed: supposing that instead of our architects being as now taught only architecture pure and simple to the neglect of the associated arts, or still worse, being collected into a close body from which of course painting and sculpture would naturally receive still less attention than now, because the architect would be divided by professional barriers from other artists, and would learn nothing but architecture of the most unmitigated description: supposing that instead of this some plan could be devised by which artists of all kinds were drawn more together into a school which should embrace them all in one general system of instruction in art, such as the Royal Academy might have been, and might perhaps still become: would this suffice to remedy the evil we have complained of?

I think not. Such a condition seems to require a much more violent remedy; one that

amounts almost to a revolution in our practice. I believe that the result we desire will never be attained so long as not only the critical knowledge, but the actual *practice* of the three arts remains distinct; that they will never be brought into obedience to one common style so long as each of them is assigned to a distinct professional body, and regarded as a distinct craft with which outsiders must not presume to meddle.

That an attempt to introduce such a change as is here suggested would be most revolutionary need hardly be pointed out to any one who knows how modern art is practised. How many among our painters and sculptors have any sound knowledge of architecture, and how many of our architects have any knowledge at all, that can be called knowledge, of painting and sculpture? And yet how can a painter or a sculptor who is ignorant of architecture possibly understand the meaning of the architect whose building he is called upon to decorate, or how can he be sure that his work will harmonise with the building? Of course it is impossible, and the result is that his statue or painting

would be more at home, and more in its proper place, in the artist's studio than in the position it is destined to occupy. The work of such men, even when intended to be decorative, must be regarded as self-contained, complete in itself, and independent of circumstances. It must be criticised as we should criticise a picture or a statue in a gallery or exhibition; and the building, for the sole purpose of decorating which it exists at all, must be regarded merely a museum, a receptacle, a place to hold it. A mural painting executed in this way is less suitable and less effective, and less in its place, than a well-chosen wall-paper would be. Independently, it may be a fine work, but being a mural painting, and therefore essentially decorative, it cannot claim to be judged independently. It ought, if meant to be so judged, to have been painted as an easel picture, and enclosed in a gilt frame which would cut it off from its surroundings and place it in a world by itself.

As for our architects, that they should have any *practical* knowledge of these arts is hardly to be expected at the present day, and from

some quarters such a knowledge would even be looked upon with suspicion and disfavour. But if we expect less than this : if we only ask whether they have a sound critical knowlege of the other arts, shall we find them as a body better informed on these subjects than the general mass of educated men ? Certainly not. The majority of our architects are no better qualified to criticise works of painting and sculpture than the majority of our painters and sculptors to pronounce an opinion upon the technicalities of architecture. The minority who are better informed spend their days in disappointment and disgust, complaining that they cannot get carving and decorations done to their taste or suitable to their buildings. Their knowledge in many cases serves merely to widen the existing breach by impelling them to dispense altogether with the aid of men whose work will not harmonise with their own. Some of those simple and purely architectural buildings which have been built by the present generation from a motive such as this, are by far the most satisfactory that we have to show. They are not in the first rank of art, because the

absence of the other arts leaves them imperfect, but at all events they are harmonious and consistent in all their parts; they bear throughout the impress of a single mind, for they contain nothing which the architect has not been able to design and superintend himself. It must be remembered, however, that it is only on a humble scale, or where severity and simplicity befit the purpose of the building (as for instance, in the case of warehouses, factories, railway works, and so on), that a purely architectural style is endurable. As soon as the building emerges from simplicity and severity so soon does it begin to require decoration of a different kind from that which architecture can afford; and it is precisely at this point, when the demand upon the artist's skill and knowledge is most pressing, that modern architects generally break down. It may safely be said that of all our modern buildings, the most costly and the most highly decorated are as a rule the least successful.

But the mischief of the present system appears not only in the discordant character of modern decoration, but in the *inferiority in kind*

of the decoration to which the architect is driven to resort. Knowing nothing but architecture, he uses architectural forms for his ornament in preference to any others, and thereby necessarily lowers his building in the scale of artistic excellence.

When an ancient architect had but little money at his disposal, he could build as simply as possible; he could be contented with pure architecture; the simple geometrical forms of his arches and traceries. Many buildings of this sort remain, and are full of grandeur and nobility, although the want of direct representation of natural form and life excludes them from the front rank of art work. But when an ancient architect had plenty of money to spend on his building, as a matter of course he carved and painted it. He covered the walls with frescoes; he filled the windows with painted glass; he carved his capitals and cornices with exquisite foliage; he enriched his whole building with sculpture of the highest class, that of the human form. Hosts of figures, angelic, saintly, and historic, peopled the niches; crowded the arched portals; flanked the doorways;

balanced themselves on giddy pinnacles ; fitted themselves into the spandrils of arches, and wall-panels, or ranged themselves in regular friezes.

But when a modern architect has to decorate his work, his first and natural impulse is quite a different one. His education in art has been confined to architecture pure and simple. His mind is stored with ideas of pillars and arches, quatrefoils and trefoils, and other geometrical figures that can be struck with compasses or drawn with a ruler. His notion of decoration therefore consists in covering his walls with imitations of architectural forms, and geometrical figures ; arcadings and blank traceries, like windows and arches built up ; panels filled with intricate geometrical patterns designed with the utmost labour and ingenuity ; chamfers and stoppings ; notchings and scallopings ; and oftentimes the nearest approach that he makes to sculpture consists in such conventional ornaments as dog-teeth and nail-heads, which at a distance give promise of sculpture but disappoint on a nearer approach.

Now such ornaments as these are not to be

altogether condemned. Nail-heads are appropriate enough in certain places, as, for instance, at great heights, where it is desired to produce richness and brilliancy by little points of shadow, but where delicate sculpture would be too remote to be seen, and therefore would be thrown away. The magnificent south-west steeple of Chartres Cathedral is full of this sort of ornamentation, which perfectly answers the purpose for which it is intended.* Dog-teeth, as everyone knows, are very frequent in old Gothic buildings. As for the system of chamfering and stopping, and all the varieties of notchings and scallopings, one cannot say as much for them; it was reserved for the intellectual efforts of our own generation to develop them into an art; I know of nothing corresponding to them in old work. It must be confessed also that decoration by arcadings and

* In ancient examples, nail-heads, even when at a great height, are very small and delicate. Nothing can be coarser or worse than such things on a large scale, as may be seen at the new Blackfriars Bridge, where the cornices are decorated with gigantic nail-heads, nine inches square, with the worst effect. Indeed this bridge affords instances of almost every way in which Gothic forms can be wrongfully used.

blank traceries is common enough in old Gothic work. In many cases, indeed, they are really constructional features; the wall-arcadings in particular have generally some useful purpose; either they form recesses for seats, like the wall-arcades of cathedral aisles, or else they serve to diminish the weight of the walls by saving material. Setting aside these cases, however, no doubt a great many instances remain in which these features are purely decorative, mere imitations or models of real architectural construction.

Two things, however, must be observed about the way in which this kind of ornament was used anciently: firstly, that when Gothic architecture was in its prime, although the architect sometimes employed these modes of decoration, he did not content himself with them, but made a still larger use of painting and sculpture; whereas our modern architects think these sufficient by themselves, and wish for nothing more. Secondly, it must be observed that beautiful as the best Gothic work is, one cannot, after all, regard it as a perfect art; and it will, I believe, be felt by all who have studied

the subject, and will take the trouble to analyse their own feelings, that some of the best and most delightful developments of the style are impaired by the use of those very modes of decoration about which we are now speaking. Most students of Gothic architecture must get tired of dog-teeth before very long, and even lose a great part of their interest in those beautiful buildings, such as some of the Yorkshire abbeys, where scarcely any other kind of decoration is found. There is no doubt that the prevalence of the dog-tooth in that early style of Gothic which is peculiar to this country, and which we call early English, has done much to give it that hardness and insipidity of which one cannot but be sensible.

The same remark applies to blank traceries and arcadings, for which the taste became stronger as the art declined in vigour, till at last the only idea of ornamenting the panel of a pulpit, or the side of a font, or the end of a church pew, seems to have been to carve upon it a model of the window tracery of the period reduced to the size of a toy.*

* Vasari in his introduction, *Alle tre Arti*, where he depreciates Gothic architecture with all the lofty contemp that

Now, these features in old work, though they are perhaps weaknesses, do not fail entirely to be attractive, and they are so not merely because they are old and interesting from association, but because of their strangely artistic execution. The men who made them seem to have felt that they were only toys, things to be thrown off quickly, done 'sketchily,' and not worthy of serious labour or high finish. And therefore we find work of this sort always full of that irregularity and technical imperfection that one looks for in a rough sketch, and which not only receives our pardon, but even makes the sketch, as such, additionally interesting and charming. What we value in a sketch is not finish, but spirit.

The modern architect goes to work in a very different way. Having made up his mind that his work must be ornamented with architectural forms toy size, he sets them all out as carefully,

became a Renaissance architect, in particular attacks that very sort of ornament by toy-construction that we are now describing. One cannot refuse one's sympathy to his honest denunciation of the 'maledizione di tabernacoli l'un sopra l'altro, con tante piramidi e punte e foglie,' &c., in which Gothic architecture, especially in its later days, took delight.

and executes them as laboriously, as if he were constructing real windows and arcades in stone-work, the result being a piece of ornament as hard and mechanical as a Gothic cast-iron stove, and artistically equally valuable.

But it is not only in the detail and ornamentation of his works that an architect is betrayed into mistakes by ignorance or neglect of the other arts; his buildings suffer in general design as well as in detail. His excessive attachment to mere architectural form not only makes him careless about those natural forms which painting and sculpture would have enabled him to reflect in his work, but it also makes him forget to give that expression to the natural laws of construction which characterises good architecture, and leads him to use ordinary architectural forms ignorantly, without reference to the principles in which those very forms originated.

The first office, as we have seen, of the artistic part of architecture is to arrange those solid bodies and plane surfaces which are, in a great measure, given or suggested by the requirements of the building in such a way as

that they shall not only satisfy constructional propriety, but appear to do so; and in all good styles this result has been attained.

Now, from various causes, partly constructional, partly depending on convenience of plan, partly perhaps (though not wholly, nor indeed principally, as some would have it) æsthetical, the vertical line plays a very important part in Gothic design. The lofty towers, steep gables, tall, straight buttresses, taper spires, slender pinnacles, and turrets outside our Gothic buildings, and the long, reedy vaulting shafts and clustered columns within, all bear witness to this. But, at the same time, it is remarkable how in the best Gothic work expression was always given to the fact that the whole or greater part of the walls was built with horizontal courses. Horizontal lines abound throughout every part of a Gothic design; both within and without the building strings mark the division of the several stages, and capitals, abaci, and impost-mouldings emphasise the springing of arches and distinguish them from their piers. The wonderful perspective effects of a Gothic interior are owing quite as much to the hori-

zontal as to the vertical lines, on which last people generally insist. In those comparatively exceptional instances where the horizontal features are absent or slightly expressed, the confused and weak character of the design, which is the result, shows at once the truth of this. Even in so extreme a case as a church steeple, where the vertical line seems most essential to the design, we find horizontal string-courses at every stage, and sometimes intermediate string-courses as well, ranging with the capitals or the bands of columns, or the springing lines of windows or doors, and invariably a cornice more or less strongly marked at the springing of the spire, dividing the tower or main fabric from the spire or roof that covers it; and even the spire itself is, in many instances, banded across horizontally.

If we take even the extremest instance of all, such structures as the monumental crosses at Waltham and Northampton, where the essence of the design would seem to consist in a tapering conical outline and a vertical line predominant, yet even in these works, so unrivalled in outline and proportion, we find the horizontal

line well and even strongly marked. The composition is divided into three stages by two horizontal bands or parapets, so richly adorned with tracery work that they are perhaps the most conspicuous part of the decoration; and the base is formed of a pyramid of steps, which give horizontal lines in abundance. The architect seems to have felt that in buildings of this kind, composed largely of shafts, pinnacles, and other slender vertical members, there was great danger lest the whole should look weak and disconnected, like a bundle of staves loosely bound up. He therefore insisted strongly on his horizontal lines, and especially on the richly traceried parapets which seem to bind the fabric firmly together, and which, by reminding us of the fact that the building is constructed of stone with horizontal beds and courses, not of spars of stone set insecurely on end, restore the appearance of solidity.

The modern architect sets to work in a very different way. His mind is occupied with the forms of geometrical figures, plane and solid; and when he has to design a spire or a cross, instead of mentally *building up* his design he

conceives it at once, as one conceives the idea of a cube, or a pyramid, or a cone, or a prism. His church steeple, or his 'Eleanor cross' (as it is the fashion to call these monuments), is imagined as a homogeneous body of a certain mathematical form, and his object seems to be that it shall have the effect of growing up like a plant, or of shooting up into the air like a crystal, or a frozen 'jet d'eau.' Consequently while the vertical lines of the building are insisted upon firmly, as indeed they ought to be in a building of this nature, the horizontal lines are forgotten or ignored. Instances are not far to seek of steeples designed in this faulty way; plenty of modern churches, and still more dissenting meeting-houses, will furnish examples of a confused upward structure by way of steeple in which all the parts are melted and run together, in which one cannot divide one stage of the tower from another, or say exactly where tower ends and spire begins.

The old Gothic crosses as they rise upward do not melt into one homogeneous cone like a reversed icicle; on the contrary, they are composed of a number of independent structures, each

consisting of something like what the classicists would call a base, die, and cornice superimposed upon one another. But in the modern works of which we have been speaking the idea of the designer has been to join a succession of solid geometrical figures or prisms insensibly to one another, or rather to make one prism melt into or grow out of another of a different form, without any line of separation or distinction.. This is done by means of broaches and splays, and chamferings of all forms and sizes; or, in other words, by various geometrical figures disposed in different planes, so as to meet or join each other with nicety, fitting, in fact, as much as possible in the same way as the fascets of a well cut jewel.

It is difficult to explain in words this difference between the old and new manner of architectural design. It is briefly this: The ancient architect bestowed his attention chiefly on the natural part of the design: he exhausted his invention in decorating his building with forms of natural beauty, and he was contented with a straightforward style of architecture designed in close conformity with the mode of building.

The modern architect exhausts his ingenuity in the more mechanical part of the design, decorates it with geometrical and conventional ornaments, and designs it not in conformity with the mode of construction, but as if it were a solid homogeneous body to be shaped into certain geometrical figures and mathematical proportions.

There can be no doubt that the cause of this consists in the fact that our architects are taught nothing but sheer architecture, and study nothing but conventional and geometrical forms. Of the other arts they learn nothing, and when they sit down to design their thoughts are naturally confined to those purely architectural forms in which alone they have been instructed.

The only remedy for this will be to establish the education of our art students on a wider basis : not to bring them up with the knowledge of only one branch of art and to leave them in ignorance of the others, but to guide them to a knowledge of all the resources which art places at man's disposal, and to give them a comprehensive view of the whole field in which they are labourers.

To many, perhaps to most, such a scheme as that of uniting in the same persons the knowledge, and consequently the practice, of what are now considered to be three distinct crafts will no doubt seem too chimerical and visionary to succeed. Still, if the present division is admitted to be an evil, it is at least worth while to try a remedy which promises to meet the evil so directly. And as to the impossibility of success, there is surely nothing monstrous or unreasonable in the proposition that the man who designs a building should also be the person to decorate it. But, granting that this does contain something strange and startling to modern ideas, there is, in fact, nothing really new or experimental in it whatsoever. It is as old as art itself. So far as we can trace, it has been the general custom at those periods of the world's history when art has thriven, and among those peoples whose works have come down to receive our wondering admiration and despairing imitation—Pheidias and Polycletus among the ancients, Giotto, Brunelleschi, and Michel Angelo among the moderns, were *artists* in the sense in which I would have the word understood. In some

their artistic thoughts found expression more often, or were more vividly put forth, in one manner than in another; some delighted more in the use of the brush, others in that of the chisel, and their work in one field or the other is consequently more famous than the rest of what they did. Others again worked equally well in all: it is impossible to say whether Giotto was greater as a painter or as an architect,* or Michel Angelo as a painter, architect, or sculptor. But they were ready and able to work nobly in whatever field they were called upon to labour, and we find everything they left behind them, whether it be a building, a statue, or a painting, stamped with their own personal impress, and therefore harmonious, and consistent, and obedient to one common style.

The list of artists who excelled in the three arts might easily be swelled till it included the names of nearly all those men of the earlier schools who have become famous. It is true that very little is known historically about the

* He is known to have worked as a sculptor also; the reliefs in the lower stage of his campanile are attributed to his hand, and are in every way worthy of him.

artists who were employed in designing the great cathedrals of England and France: we have a few empty names in connection with certain buildings, but in the greater number of cases even the very names of the artists have been forgotten. We know as yet very little of the way in which Gothic architecture was practised in those countries when it was at its prime, or of the actual part which the architect played in the construction and execution of his building. What little we do know certainly favours the idea that there was some one person over each building, who not only made the general plan, but designed and superintended, and probably partly executed with his own hand the decoration by painting and sculpture. It is consistent with the simplicity of a youthful society that this should be so, rather than that art should have been already broken up and divided among three distinct professional bodies. The theory is borne out by the history of the only mediæval art of which we know anything with certainty—that of Italy—where, beyond a doubt, the general practice throughout the whole period of Gothic architecture was as I have supposed it to have

been everywhere; and, above all, when one contemplates the perfect fitness and harmony which unites the architecture and the decoration into one complete whole, it is scarcely possible to conceive that it could have been otherwise.*

But whether it was the case or not that Gothic art was practised in Northern Europe in the same way as in Italy, the fact of this harmony, which united the three branches into one living style, is unmistakeable. Whether each work was the fruit of one mind, or of several minds trained in the same school and working in the same style; whether the ancient architects practised all three arts themselves, or whether they merely practised one, and possessed only a theoretical acquaintance with the others; whatever means were employed, the proper end was reached. With us it is very different: our arts are at

* About one-half of the contents of the sketch-book of Wilars de Honecourt, an architect of the thirteenth century, consists in studies of the human figure and animals, evidently made for use in painting and sculpture. The style of the drawing is in its way very masterly, and exactly resembles that of the cotemporary glass-paintings. Professor Willis, in the notes to his facsimile edition, remarks that many of the studies are evidently drawn from life.

variance, and have to be reconciled and reduced to one common style : theirs were already concordant. The mode of practice which I have ventured to propose is necessary for us, even supposing that it is not, what it probably is, the one which our forefathers followed.

CHAPTER VI.

ARCHITECTURALISM—*continued.*

A FEW words must be added to what has been said above to point out that the study of the decorative arts by our architects would not only give them, when they sit down to design, the command of new resources beyond any that mere architecture can afford, but would act directly even upon those parts of their design which are purely architectural. The almost inevitable result of such an enlargement of an architect's education would be to cast architectural design into a new form ; and in the new method of study we should possess an instrument of the greatest service in helping forward that development of a modern architectural style to which we look forward.

As we have said already, this development must be spontaneous and undesigned, the result of inward growth, not of any direct attempt at construction from without. It is impossible for

us by any effort of self-consciousness to cast our architecture at once into that form which is necessary to make it a reflection of the nineteenth century civilisation. All we can do is to modify it in particulars, to free our minds from prejudice, and from that unreflecting attachment to habitual modes of working which is so easily acquired and so difficult to shake off, and to keep ourselves in an attitude of readiness to throw our work into any mould that will most exactly fit the requirements of the day. It is impossible by any conscious effort on our part materially to advance our architecture as a whole towards the end we have in view.

With the decorative arts the case is different. They imitate natural *form* directly, while architecture, as has been explained above, only gives expression to natural *truths*, which have to be felt after, and can only be regained slowly and gradually by those who, like ourselves, have lost the clue to them which a living style affords. Architecture reflects nature abstractedly, but painting and sculpture simply and immediately; the painter or sculptor has only to use his eyes

and to paint or carve what he sees, and as he sees it, to the best of his knowledge and skill; and if he does this, his art cannot fail to be historic and good.

Since, then, our object ought to be to make our art (that is to say, art in all its branches, not only in one) a living and vernacular style representative of ourselves, and, in a word, *historical*, it is better and safer to approach it from the side of painting and sculpture than that of architecture. The difficulties will be fewer, and, what is very important, the prejudices that oppose us will be less violent and deeply-rooted. Popular opinion, to some extent, will support us when we demand that painting and sculpture should be true and natural, though it will not be able to follow us when we proceed to apply the same rule to architecture. People can understand without much difficulty that pictures ought to be faithful likenesses of those things which we actually see around us. It is not by the general public that we shall be troubled with that purism which induces the mediævalist to paint or carve things not as he knows them to be, but as they seemed to people

who lived five or six centuries ago. Nothing is more common than to hear people who have only a very general acquaintance with the principles of art ridicule those barbarous grotesques, those uncomfortable Punch and Judy figures, with stiff necks, wooden faces, and contorted wrists and ancles, with which modern glass-painters have been filling, and continue to fill, our windows; or to see them turn unobservantly from the masses of conventional carving with which modern churches are generally belaboured, and fix their admiration on some little bit of natural foliage on bench-end or label-stopping, which had been little thought of by carver or architect, but which alone out of all their work meets with recognition from the uninstructed observer, and finds its way straight to his intelligence. And let it never be forgotten that it is only when art is so recognised and understood to be natural and true that it fulfils its true office, which is not so much to reflect nature as to give that representation of her which satisfies our own minds, and consequently becomes reflective not so much of nature as of us. No doubt the rudest carvings

of antiquity, which seem to us conventional and grotesque, were intended to be naturalesque, and no doubt they were enough so to satisfy those who carved them, and to pass in their judgment for good representations of nature. If it were not so, their art would not be what we know it to be, historical, any more than ours is when we imitate what they did, in spite of our own more extended knowledge. For this, after all, is the highest test of a really living art, not its perfect naturalism *objectively*, but its perfect naturalism *subjectively*.

The revival of painting and sculpture, regarded as decorative arts, to a real energising life is not a thing that need be very remote; nor is it a thing that, like the revival of architecture, will be impeded by conscious effort to promote it. In architecture there is nothing for it but to go on for the present doing that very thing which we condemn in the painter or sculptor—namely, imitating the style of another and a very different age, and, to some extent, affecting a mode of expression very inadequate to our own ideas. Architecture at the present day is a field of promise rather than of harvest;

all we do in it must be regarded as prospective, tentative, as the necessary sowing and husbandry before a harvest can be gained. Our work has the value of an exercise, not that of an original composition ; and when we gain the power of composing anything of our own, the old lessons and exercises will be thrown aside. A future generation, with a style of its own, will despise our copies of other people's ideas ; our work will have but little historical value in their eyes, for it will tell very little about us except negatively, showing what we were not and had not rather than what we were and had —our deficiencies rather than our attainments. Our buildings will teach no lesson that will profit them, afford no example from which they need condescend to learn ; our work will be like those strange copies of the religious woodcuts that were common in Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which were made by Chinese artists for the Jesuit missionaries in China, which have not the merit either of European or of oriental art, and are evidently done by men working, as it were, in the dark, scarcely conscious of the meaning and

intention of the lines and figures they were transcribing. One might as well expect people to study design from such work as this as to expect future generations to learn architecture from what we shall leave them, if at least we may judge from what we have hitherto accomplished. It is only in proportion as our architecture has expanded, and continues to expand, into freer vital action, that it is of any use to us, except as a training and exercise, or to those who come after us, except as a warning. Modern architecture is, and must for the present continue to be, an anachronism, an affectation, a sham. There is no reason to doubt that it has promise of life within it, and has already begun to take root; but there can be no doubt whatever that at present its life, such as it is, is chiefly drawn from the parent stock, and that it has very little independent spontaneous vitality of its own, and, moreover, that it will not bear forcing, but must be allowed to grow at its own natural pace.

Ought not this melancholy condition of our architecture, then, make us turn towards the other arts which are not in so almost hopeless

a state? Ought it not to suggest to our artists the preference of those means by which our thoughts can find more ready expression, and by which modern civilisation can be more exactly reflected? It is chiefly by our painting and sculpture that we shall live in that page of history that art supplies, and consequently it is on these arts decoratively applied that we ought to hang our greatest architectural efforts. It is only in them that we know how to be natural, and it is only by their aid that our art can advance any claim to be considered historic.

Perhaps, circumstanced as we are, the less we concern ourselves with abstract architecture the better; at least with architectural ornament, for architectural rule to some extent we must of course employ. For the mass and general design and proportion we shall necessarily want it, and here of course we shall work in that style which is the only one that is in any degree suitable to our country and our age. All our buildings must be Gothic so far as concerns their general effect: and as we are to copy, let us copy well and closely, modelling our buildings on the same rules of design as the ancient

ones. But in our decorative details, in which it is that the artist requires to be more accurately reflected, let us shrink from the use of architectural forms wherever they can be avoided without doing violence to the style we are obliged to adopt. Let us fly at once to nature, and instead of making window traceries and arcadings toy-size, or whittling and chopping our angles of wood and stone into notchings or scollopings, and such like puerilites, let us copy what we know to be real and true and *our own*, not borrowed from other times. Here we can catch true life, and breathe it into our work, and make that live too : every touch of pure nature that we put into what we do makes it living, representative, and historical ; whereas every trait of mind and manner not our own that finds its way into our work makes it so much the less valuable, less our own, and more archaic and conventional. Bare blank stone is better than all the conventional ornaments we have spoken of above : let us give them up at once and for all. If we cannot have better let us have none. One spray of foliage—nay, a single leaf—carved with feeling and taste, is worth five hundred

notchings. One figure in painting or mosaic really pourtraying a man or a woman, such as men and women seem to us, truthfully and faithfully, is worth whole ranges of arcading or blank traceries, or geometrical panel work, and will do more than they to make our building interesting.

But the point which I wish especially to illustrate in this chapter is not that we are to cultivate painting and sculpture as a mode of escape from a lifeless architecture, but that by combining the three arts we shall be most likely to succeed in restoring our dead architecture to life: that by making use principally of painting and sculpture to decorate our buildings we shall not supersede architecture altogether; that the real consequence will be that we shall not only introduce true and natural decorative work, but shall also do much towards reviving our architecture itself. If architecture on the one hand languishes from not being natural, from being conventional, adopted, assumed, if it is impossible to breathe life into it by a direct effort of our own; and if, on the other hand, painting and sculpture give us a ready and

immediate approach to nature, and admit of being engrafted on our architecture so closely as to form part of it—nay, if they even demand as a right and a necessity to be so engrafted—can we doubt what the effect upon our architecture will be if we do engraft the other arts upon it? Will not the absorption of the two decorative arts that are living, or may easily be made to live, into the dormant and semi-defunct one, be instrumental in revivifying it into a corresponding life of its own which will find expression in such a living architectural style as we want? There is no stronger reason than this one for the instruction of our architects in the decorative arts.

Supposing, then, that art is for the future to be practised on this new system (and there are not wanting many indications that such a revolution is gradually coming to pass),* it is evident that we shall have to attach a different

* In support of this statement may be instanced the schools for drawing from the antique and from life that are frequented by architects at the Architectural Museum and elsewhere, and also to the increasing disposition of those painters and sculptors in whom we find the brightest promise to cast their work into a decorative form.

meaning to the word architecture, and to assign different functions to the office of architect from those which they now possess. Under the new system there will be no place for those whom we now call architects, and who confine themselves to the study of pure architectural form. Hitherto they have been allowed to adorn their buildings after their own fashion with conventional and architectural ornament: but if this is to be discouraged—if arcadings and blank traceries are to be despised, if notchings, and chamferings, and stoppings, and all the other vulgar resources of the art are to be for the future consigned to disuse—what will there be left for the modern architect to do? Is he to be satisfied with arranging the plan, and designing roughly the mass of the building, and to be responsible only for its effect when seen a furlong off, leaving everything that a nearer approach would discover to other artists in whose labours he has no share and takes no concern? Is the architect, the head artificer, the master craftsman, to become a mere canvas-stretcher, a mere frame-maker for his under artists; is he to sink into a mere builder, arranging and planning

conveniently, but unable to compose his useful ideas into a presentable shape, and obliged to pass them on in the rough to be moulded by other men into an artistic form? Surely this is not to be an architect at all: it is an abdication of all those functions that of right belong to the office. If things ever come to such a pass as this, we shall not, properly speaking, have any architects at all, and architecture will be an extinct art. For by architecture we ought to understand—and in our properly understanding it is involved the whole principle of the new system that has just been advocated—not merely the shaping of pillars and arches, doors and windows, and the proportioning of the different parts to one another and to the whole; regarded in the widest and highest application of the term, architecture is that master art which governs all the rest, not only the humbler and more mechanical arts of masonry and carpentry, but the higher arts of decoration by painting and sculpture. It is that art which impresses a noble structure with a character of unity and consistency in all its parts; which stamps every detail with the seal of one general style; it is

an outward and visible expression of human thought working with various means and instruments towards one common end. Architecture understood in this wider sense includes within itself architecture proper, and the arts of painting and sculpture as well when used decoratively. It is, in fact, that which unites them into that common art of which we have spoken, and brings them into that harmony without which they are individually valueless.

Henceforth, then, instead of architects, painters, and sculptors, let us have *artists*—men who practise not this or that form of art, but *art itself*. Or let us call them *architects*, professors of that great master art which governs all that art can do for a building, and presides over every kind of design and decoration which a building is capable of receiving. Let the architect who now spends his time in laboriously collecting and reproducing sections of mouldings from old buildings, who notices the slightest peculiarity in the profile of a capital, the merest hairbreadth of difference in the projection of an abacus or a string course, who tries to catch the exact sweep of an arch or the precise indenta-

tion of a cusp, who religiously measures the depth of a hollow, or values the weight of a roll-moulding—let him lift his eyes and look beyond these dead stones of human workmanship, and model his ornament after the original and not the copy; after nature herself, not after that dim reflection of her which is all that art-work, however noble, can ever be. Let him learn to carve and paint what he sees in the living world around him; let him learn the structure of the human form as well as that of a stone building; let him study its shapely limbs as carefully as the proportions of his pillars, the sweep of a contour as accurately as the curve of his arch; and let him learn to compose the folds of his draperies with as much art as the mouldings of his archivolts. And if those whom we call architects have to learn to handle not only the compasses and square, but the brush, the chisel, and the modelling tool, those whom we call painters and sculptors must also learn how to create as well as how to decorate. The men who now go into a great building to paint or carve it with as little share in the architectural design of what they are to decorate as

the plumber or the glazier who enter it to lay the water-pipes or glaze the windows, must be also the men who have planned and contrived the general mass, and that more abstract ornamentation that is generally called its architecture. The man who fills the windows with stained glass must be the man who has designed the tracery. The man who fixes the position of capital or corbel, and who knows best what it has to do and what weight is put upon it, must be the man who composes the foliage into which it is to be carved, so as best to express the degree of power required of it.

So mischievous is the present system of studying architecture exclusively, that its influence for wrong may be traced in nearly every one of those errors which have been pointed out in former chapters: if it is not their principal cause, it is at all events one great obstacle to their removal.

The formalist who thinks (if he thinks at all, for he is the most unthinking of all who profess to be artists), that the use of certain recognised forms, and methods, and materials, such as pointed arches, traceries, cusps, spires, stained

deal, cathedral glass, and Minton's tiles, make his building honest living Gothic work, and who innocently wonders at you if you express a doubt of its being so—this man is evidently the victim of architecturalism (if I may coin the word) in a very extreme form. He would think it as unfair to be asked to design his own painting and sculpture as to be expected to draw the conveyance of the site on which he is going to build. The knowledge how to use the brush or the chisel would seem to him as foreign to his vocation as that of filing a bill in Chancery. He is the man of all others who is the most anxious to 'raise' architecture into a profession, a step which would inevitably prevent anything like amalgamation between it and the other arts.

To the purists, whose principle is that nothing must be done without a precedent in ancient Gothic art, who spend the time of their education in measuring mouldings, and tracing cusps, plumbing heights, and calculating the proportions of old buildings, and in drawing the sculpture and painting on walls and glass which they find there (all very laudable and necessary

studies in their way, if undertaken not in an antiquarian but a practical spirit), and who regard old work with a blind, unreflecting worship, and follow its example with unswerving fidelity in all they do whithersoever it may lead them—to these men the study of nature which the pursuits of painting and sculpture would necessitate would be of more service than any other training. Nothing would so immediately raise their eyes from their too absorbing occupation, and relegate the study of Gothic architecture to its proper place in their estimation, as only a means towards something better and more useful to a modern state of society.

The sensationalist, the affecter of originality, though, so far as his faults proceed from vanity, he is incurable, yet would not have sinned in his particularly disagreeable way if other fields of originality besides that of architecture had been open to him. What is so grievous in his work is that he cannot let alone what only required to be let alone in order to look well. He must give a pretentious character to everything he does ; every feature in his design must be made

to look lively and busy; and, as he has only learned to deal with architecture and not with the other arts, he falls upon his plain, honest building-stones, that only wanted to serve humbly and unpretendingly as coigns, or voussoirs, or jamb-stones, and he nicks and chops them into all sorts of unmeaning chamfers and notchings, by way of goading them into feats of architecture quite beyond them and quite unsuited to their character.*

From men of this school of course good work cannot be expected; but still, if what they are pleased to consider the irrepressible exuberance of their fancy, which drives them into these eccentricities, had been expended on decoration rather than on architecture—if we had been able to put a paint brush into their hands when the mad fit was on instead of a T square and com-

* In a suburb of London a church has very lately been built in a most sensational style, where the architect has hit on the disagreeable idea of chamfering the edge of every alternate brick in his arches, and leaving the intermediate ones plain. The jagged lines thus formed where the eye expects simple lines have a most irritating effect; one longs to fetch a ladder and an axe and to trim off the projecting bricks even with the others.

passes—I venture to think the result would not have been so disastrous. Had they been taught the other arts, they would, at all events, have had now and then to look to nature, and they might have learned from her, if vanity allowed them, that endless variety and originality is consistent with soberness and simplicity, and that repose is necessary to the highest form of grandeur. If anything could cure them this would.

Of course it will never be possible that the architect, even if he become such an artist as we have described, should do the decoration of his buildings to any great extent with his own hands, although we maintain that he ought to be *capable* of doing it all. Something he ought to do, and certainly will do if his heart is in his work; but it will be enough if he takes up the chisel or the pencil now and then, to give the style to the work which his subordinate artists have to execute under his direction and from his general design. The important thing is that he should have such a practical acquaintance with the decorative arts as to be able to design his own ornament for in that way

only is it possible that the painting and sculpture which we bestow on our buildings should ever harmonise with our architecture. It is not thought necessary that an architect under the present system should set ashlars, or lay bricks, or frame timbers (though it would do him no harm to have actually tried his hand and laboured physically at all these building crafts), nor even that he should with his own hands set out his buildings, or make all the drawings ; but it is expected that he should know so thoroughly the proper way of doing all these things as to be able to put his finger at once on any bad work that comes under his eyes, and to show the workmen how their work ought to be done. And in the same way it would not be necessary for our architect, under the improved system, to execute any very large amount of his decoration himself ; he must give the general design, and superintend its execution, and perhaps finish with his own hand the more important parts.

If it be objected that the arts, divided as they now are, take each of them a lifetime to learn, and that to require a man who now finds it enough to

do to learn *one* for the future to learn all three is unreasonable and extravagant, and an unfair call upon the power of human nature, it may be replied, that in order to compensate our architects for the labour added on one side they may be relieved from a considerable amount on the other. The time has now come to relax somewhat that minute study of old detail which was, no doubt, indispensable and all-important when the style was at first undertaken for revival. The methods by which the effects of Gothic architecture were produced are not now strange or unknown: the general plan of Gothic ornament is tolerably familiar to us; and those who have been educated in this school fall pretty readily and naturally into the use of it when they have to work out their design in detail. For the future the same application to the study of architectural detail will not be necessary, and the student may enter upon a wider field of enterprise without fear of overtaxing his strength. The waste ground of architecture may be considered to be reclaimed and brought into cultivation—sown at all events, though not yet harvested. We have recovered as much of the old Gothic art as we

can make use of; it will not for the future require all our time and labour; but we may now go on to take in other fields, and add them to those we have already brought into a state of usefulness and promise. It would be a sad thing indeed if every generation were to have the same trouble with mastering Gothic architecture as those who first brought it forward, a neglected and forgotten art, which had to be learned like an unknown language, whose grammar and even whose alphabet must be puzzled out with difficulty and pains. We may consider ourselves as now beginning to *talk* Gothic, imperfectly and barbarously to be sure, but easily in comparison with those who first undertook to revive it. This is the very fact in which we read the first promise of future life: for the life of an art is like the life of a language; it simply consists in its being the natural vehicle for expressing ideas, one which is adopted without thought or deliberation when occasion for expressing anything occurs. Men of the Gothic school at the present day use the style to some extent in this easy and natural manner: their ideas seem to fall into it naturally when they sit

down to design; and, so far as this is the case,* the art may be said to have been revived to a new life. For the future, then, our architects will not have to undertake the severer task of discovery and exploration, but the lighter one of cultivation and improvement, and there will be no reason, on the score of preoccupation, why they should not qualify themselves to do for themselves that for which they are now obliged to fall back on the professional decorator. One may also, I think, foresee, at no great distance of time, the transfer to other and better qualified hands of a great deal of work which though now performed by the architect does not properly belong to him. Much that is now done in an architect's office would be much better done and be much more suitable to the functions of a lawyer or a surveyor, or a commission agent; and this would at once set free an immense amount of his time for purposes more pertinent to his proper duties.

* Excepting, of course, those instances where, as with the purists, the agreement of the style with the artist's ideas is produced by adapting the ideas to the style, not the style to the ideas.

If any further answer is needed to this objection on the ground of labour, it will be enough to say that what has been done once can be done again, and that, so far as we know, it has been the rule in all good styles of art that the decoration as well as the mass, the parts as well as the whole, should be designed by the same man, the master craftsman or architect. Certainly this was the case in the comparatively modern times of the Renaissance, the history of which is perfectly well known to us. If the great masters of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries found time to work in all three arts, although they were actually engaged in the discovery and revival of an extinct art, which was as new and strange to them as Gothic to our grandfathers, surely we, who have already made some progress in the revival of Gothic, and got through the worst part of the work, can do as much.

There will, indeed, be no better study for those who are learning to combine decorative and architectural design, than that of this very school of which we have just spoken in its early and vigorous youth. In the school of the Renaissance not only are the three arts united

under one common style and harmonised into one general art, but we know that all three were practised by the same artists in the very way in which I believe they ought to be practised now. It is a great thing to find a warrant for such a revolution of our practice in the system of a style under which confessedly noble work was produced, and by which art reached a pitch of excellence in some respects that has never been surpassed in the world's history.

There is one more objection that may be made to the new way of practising art which we have proposed. It may be said that it is directly opposed to our modern industrial system, in which division of labour plays so large a part, and that the dissociation of the three arts is a consistent and natural consequence of the rule by which our system of production is guided.

This introduces us to a much wider question: if it be true that that mode of labour which is the high road to material prosperity will not guide us to artistic excellence, but will rather lead us the contrary way, we must need enquire whether modern society, which makes material prosperity its end, is not by its very structure

incapacitated for developing a style of art of the highest kind.

Two things certainly which seem necessary to greatness in art, genius, and individuality are repressed by the modern system. It has been urged against it that although the general standard of usefulness may be raised, and a steady rate of progress ensured, the chances of brilliant discovery are diminished, and that rapid march towards perfection, which is to be made by genius alone, is hindered. The mechanical way of working which it encourages would certainly seem opposed to that quick intelligence and wide observation which one looks for in an artist, whose thoughts should travel beyond the piece of detail on which he happens for the moment to be engaged to the whole of which it is to form part. One has heard how in pin factories one hand makes the heads, another the shanks, another sharpens the points, till the same pin has passed perhaps through a dozen hands before it is ready for sale; so that it would be possible for a man to be all his life a pin-maker without ever seeing a complete pin. Certainly it may be doubted

whether even if it is better for the workman it is so good for the man to spend his life in making works of incompletion—pins' heads, for instance—and never to produce a perfect piece of workmanship, not even an entire pin. These are questions which cannot be debated here, except so far as they bear on the subject of art work. However far in certain directions the system of division of labour may be carried advantageously, experience shows that it cannot without the greatest mischief be insisted upon in the case of art, considering the circumstances under which modern art exists. It cannot be said that the system has not had a fair trial, for our modern way of executing a great building is exactly like that of making pins : one man designs the walls, floors, and roofs, and prepares windows, niches, and panels ; another man designs the statues and comes and puts them up in the niches, with the design of which he had nothing to do ; another carves the capitals, friezes, and panels ; another paints the walls, and designs and executes the coloured decoration ; another fills the window with painted glass ; each man knows his own branch of art and is

ignorant of that of the others. But the inharmonious result shows that this system, however good for making pins, is not the best for producing works of architecture.

Perhaps the best reply to this objection is afforded by the variety of the work which is now thrown upon an architect. Besides preparing plans and designs, he is expected to negotiate purchases or leases of building sites; to find a competent builder, and to arrange with him for the erection of the building; to draw, or at all events to advise upon the drawing of, the building contract; to arbitrate between the contractor and his employer when questions arise as to the construction of legal documents; he is invested with the entire control of all money that passes between the two parties to the contract, and payment can only be demanded when he certifies that it is due; he has to audit and tax the builder's accounts, and is expected to detect and strike out all charges that are improperly made or unfairly priced. All this, and much more that is equally foreign to the idea of architecture, an architect under the present system has to do. If division of labour is to be the

universal rule, surely the first effect of its application should be to relieve the architect of this enormous mass of illegitimate work, and to transfer part to a commission agent, part to a lawyer, part to a surveyor, and part to an accountant. That the present state of things exists is enough to prove that it is considered proper for an architect to do many things in the exercise of his profession besides designing and erecting buildings, although there can be little doubt that many of them would be better done by other hands. If, then, there is no objection to an architect undertaking occupations so incongruous with his natural work, surely there can be none whatever to his engaging in the practice of those kindred arts which are necessarily connected with his own.

There seem after all to be but these two alternative courses set before us: either we must give up practising art like a manufacture, divided and wrought piecemeal by several distinct trades, and we must restore it to what was the practice certainly at the Renaissance, and almost certainly during the Middle Ages (if which could be done there would be some hope

of its recovery); or else, if the present system is inevitable, if the proposed change is impossible, and opposed by the whole weight of the current of public opinion, we must perforce conclude that modern society is from its nature and structure incapable of the highest style of art. It is very plain that the world is unwilling to accept the latter alternative: every effort is being made to encourage artistic habits of thought and artistic ways of doing things. Bad as most of our modern art is, the abundance in which it is produced at least shows that people long for art and will not willingly be without it. May we not hope therefore that, finding the present system a failure, they will try the other, and that the next generation of our architects (for it is too late, alas, for us of the present to repair our shortcomings except very imperfectly) may be architects in that larger and wider sense in which I would have the word understood?

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